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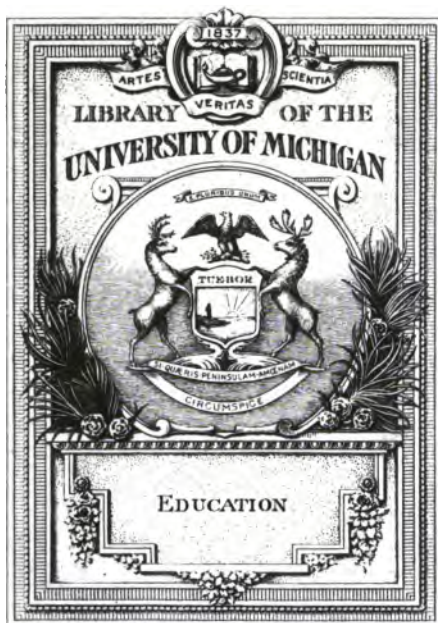
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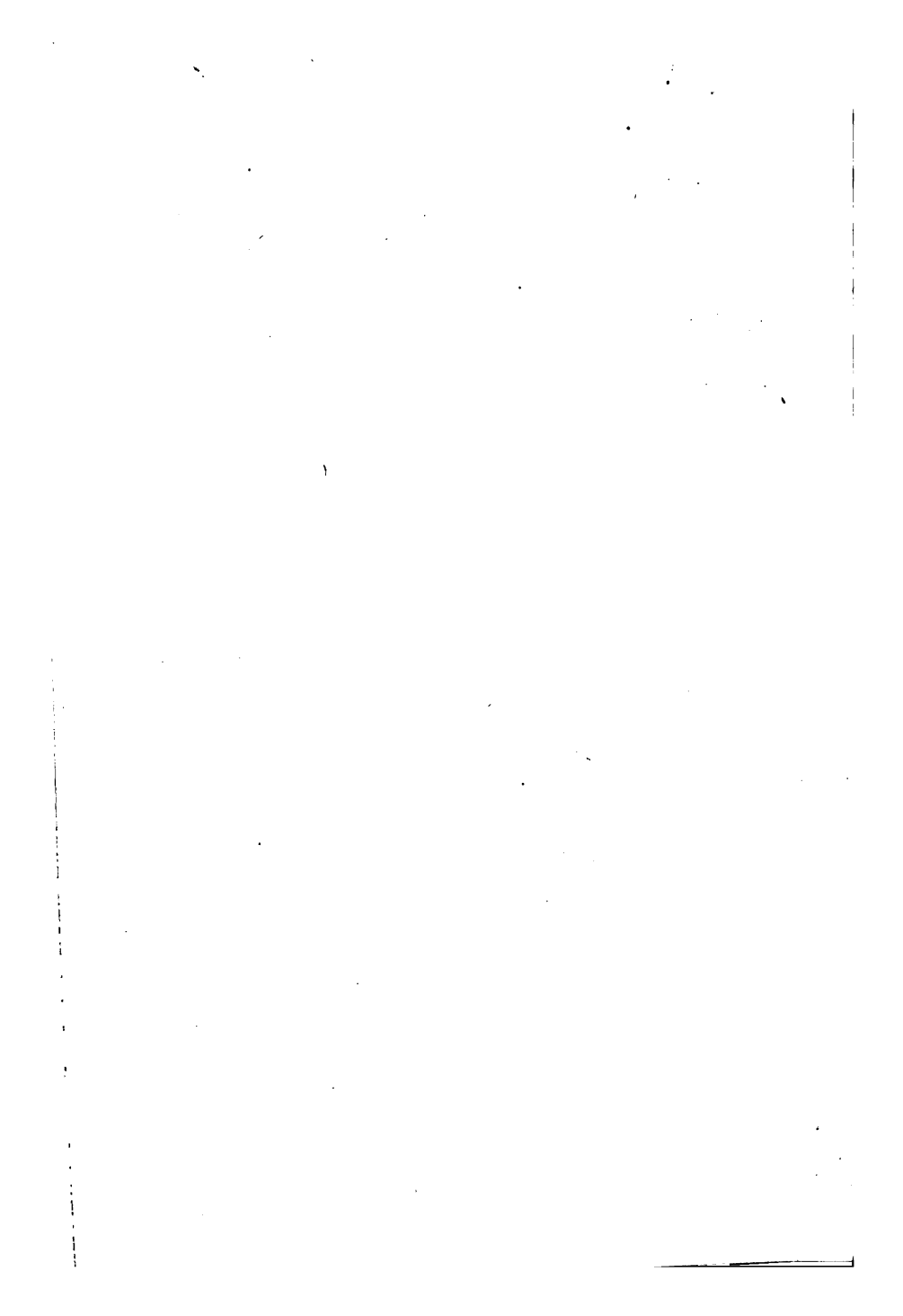
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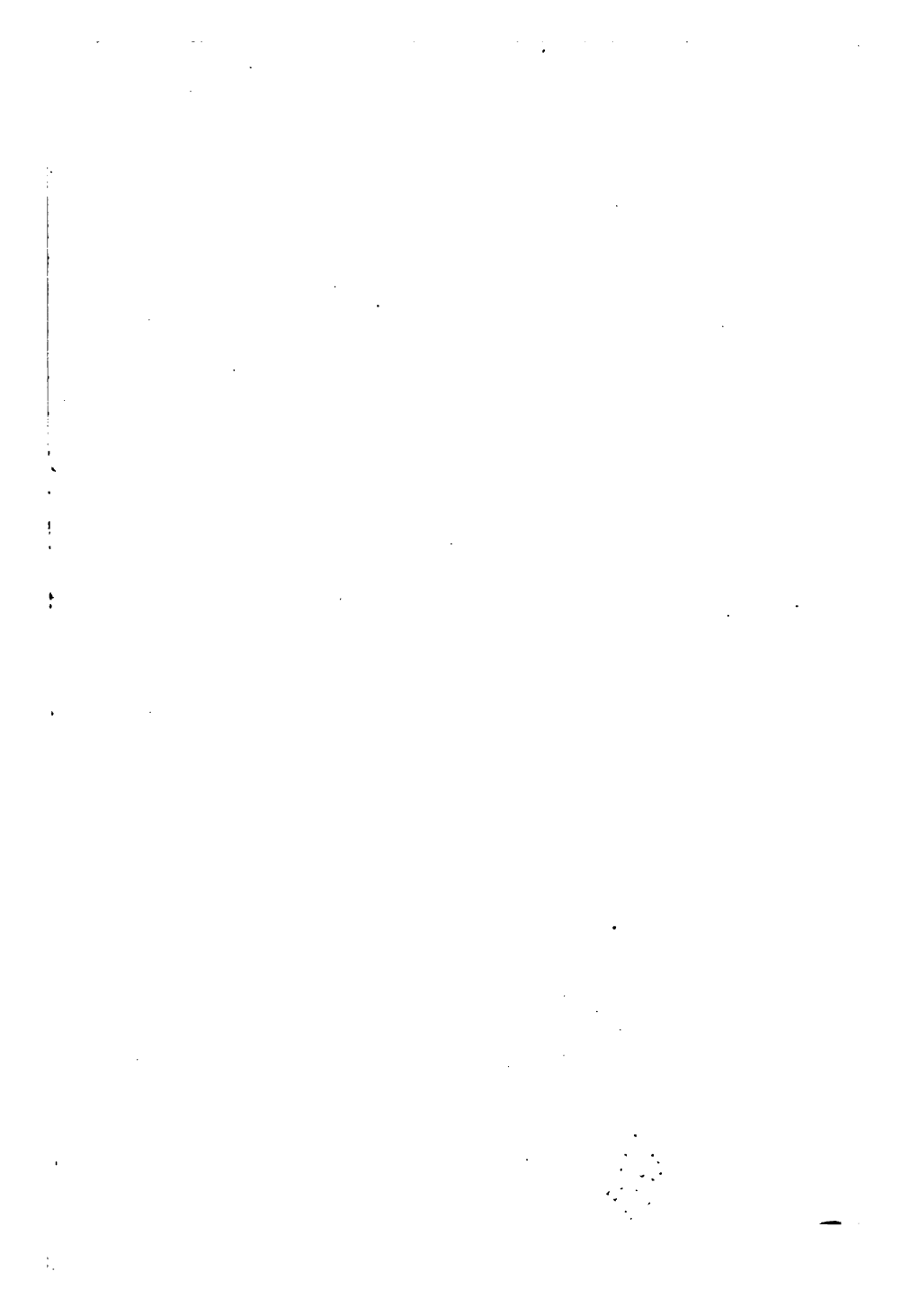


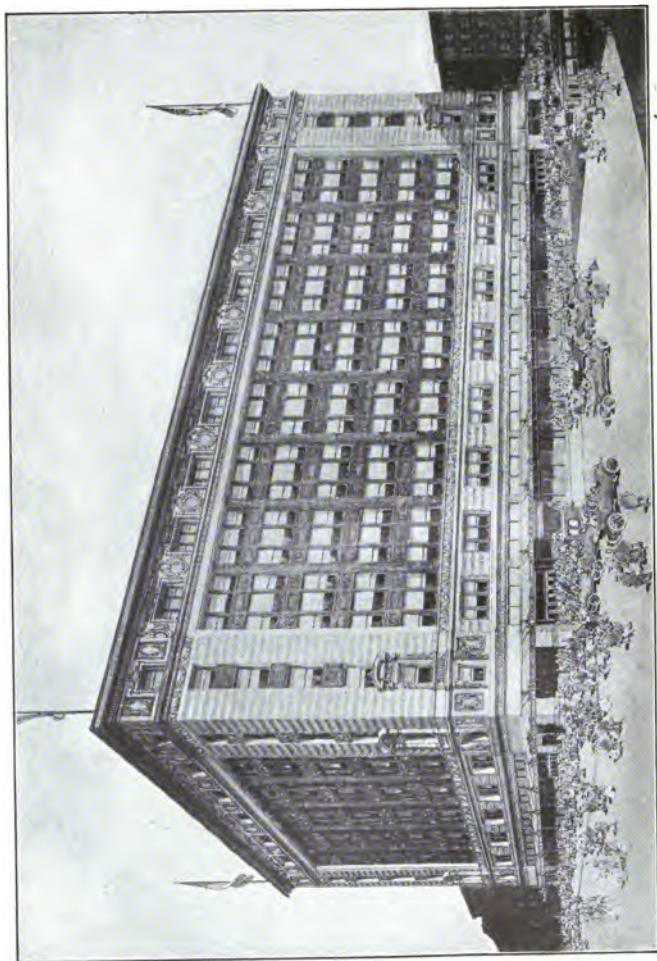
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A MODERN STORE

# A TEXTBOOK ON RETAIL SELLING

BY

HELEN RICH NORTON

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PRINCE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
FOR STORE SERVICE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



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## PREFACE

As life is sustained by industry, and industry is bound up with the operations of trade, the distribution of commodities is a widely comprehensive subject embracing in its scope such great divisions as art, science, manufacture, language, mathematics, history, commerce, ethics, economics, psychology, and sociology. The far-reaching educational possibilities of a course in retail selling are limited only by the resources of the teacher and the pupils; and a treatment of the subject from the commercial standpoint exclusively would be as narrow and one-sided as a presentation of its ethical or psychological aspects alone.

It is hoped that this book — the outgrowth of eight years' experience in teaching classes in salesmanship — will be interesting and profitable to students of this subject in both schools and stores. The author has endeavored to make clear her own conviction that selling is a desirable means of earning a livelihood, by showing that it brings both economic and personal satisfaction; that it offers opportunities for education in matters of broad and vital interest; and that it unquestionably affords a field for needed service. If by giving to those for whom it is written a better understanding of the requirements of their work, and by developing a professional spirit toward it, the book helps them to do this work with greater zest; and if it also enables them to interpret the lessons of industry in a way that will enrich both life and labor, — its purpose will have been fulfilled.

In the preparation of the manuscript the author has had the benefit of most helpful advice and criticism from

Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince, the far-sighted leader of the type of education of which this book is a modest exponent, and the director of the Prince School of Education for Store Service. The author has been privileged to work under Mrs. Prince's guidance in this school, and she feels that any degree of success which she may have attained in her own teaching is due in large measure to the vision, insight, and direction of this gifted educator, to whom grateful acknowledgment is now made.

The thanks of the author are also due to Miss Bernice M. Cannon, Educational Director, William Filene's Sons Company, for her careful reading of the proof; to Miss Lucille Eaton Hill, formerly director of physical education at Wellesley College, for the points in correct sitting and standing positions; to Mrs. Ethel P. Thoré for help with the section on the display of merchandise; and to Miss Elizabeth Harris for assistance with the Index.

For their courtesies in permitting the use of material for illustrations, acknowledgment is made to the following: The Emporium, San Francisco; L. S. Ayres and Company, Indianapolis; The Halle Brothers Company, Cleveland; Best and Company, and Rogers, Peet Company, New York; R. H. White Company, William Filene's Sons Company, Shreve, Crump and Low Company, Carbone Incorporated, the Prince School of Education for Store Service, and the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston.

Appreciation is also expressed to the individuals and publishers who permitted quotations from their works and to many friends, fellow-workers, and former pupils for valuable suggestions and for many of the anecdotes used in illustration. The author is further indebted to her mother, whose reading of the manuscript resulted in needed corrections.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

H. R. N.

## FOREWORD

### TO HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHERS

This book aims to set forth the leading principles of the topics given as chapter headings and to suggest, through questions and assignments, the development and expansion of different aspects of retail selling. It does not attempt an exhaustive treatment of any phase of the subject. It is believed that pupils of high-school standing will be able to answer all the questions either by looking into their own experience or by a reasonable amount of investigation under the direction of a qualified teacher.

The purpose of the book will be in nowise deflected if the chapters are not studied in the order given, but it is recommended that Chapters VI, VII, and VIII be taken in order because they represent three logical steps in the development of a sale.

It is urged that high-school courses in retail selling be conducted in coöperation with local stores, making it possible for high-school pupils to gain practical experience at least on Saturdays. One period each week should be devoted to class discussion of this laboratory work, as it may be termed, and a written report of the weekly store experience should be required. This report is of value as a means of stimulating observation and of increasing the permanency of impressions, and it also provides a subject of undoubted interest and vitality for written composition.

A card catalogue of pupils' store work, with a card for each day of employment, is convenient for reference and tabulation. The following form is suggested:

NAME.....	DATE.....
STORE.....	
KIND OF WORK.....	DEPT.....
IF SELLING, NO. OF SALES.....	
TOTAL AMOUNT OF SALES.....	
WAGES.....	
REMARKS.....	

The face of the card may be filled out by the pupil, the back being reserved for the teacher's estimate and for the report of the floor manager or the superintendent.

In order that the teacher may be fully cognizant of the systems, policies, and conditions of the stores in which his pupils work, he should, if possible, obtain actual experience as a worker in each of the coöperating stores.

The study of store system should occupy one period each week. Sales books of the various coöperating stores may usually be obtained for this exercise; but if this seems to be impracticable, a sales check embodying the leading points in the systems of all stores may be printed for use in the classroom. In connection with the study of system a good deal of drill in arithmetic, especially addition and fractions, has been found advisable.



The demonstration sale may be employed with good effect in high-school classes. Merchandise borrowed from stores, collected from the pupils, or lent by the Household Arts Department of the school provides the necessary equipment. A teacher, a pupil, or an interested outsider may serve as customer. The sale itself, closely observed by teacher and pupils, serves as an object lesson in selling and furnishes the material for a critical discussion which, following immediately upon the sale, is the most valuable feature of the exercise. There is perhaps no more effective means of teaching methods and principles of salesmanship than the demonstration sale accompanied by constructive criticism and careful analysis of all steps in the transaction.

Collections of illustrative material are extremely helpful and should be started as soon as a course in retail selling is established. The aid of pupils should be enlisted in the assembling of specimens, exhibits, pictures, pamphlets, clippings, and advertisements of interest in the study of merchandise and retail selling. Trade journals will be found of great value in furnishing subjects for special topics and class discussions. If it is possible to secure an appropriation for periodicals, those deemed most useful should be taken regularly. Reference books, trade journals, and advertising matter, together with first-hand acquaintance with local stores, will constitute the chief sources of information for merchandise studies. One article or line of merchandise should be presented in detail each term as a special topic. Careful attention should be given to both form and content of these studies.

In the Appendix are given lists of books and trade journals which the author has found helpful in the teaching of retail

selling and related subjects. The few references to general literature are merely suggestive of a method of interesting pupils in good reading through the vocational application. The subject of salesmanship, with its wide range of interests, presents endless possibilities as a means of developing an appreciation of literature.

All experiences, anecdotes, and advertisements cited in the text are absolutely authentic unless there is specific indication to the contrary.

In organizing a coöperative plan with local stores and as a guide in determining what should be included in the course of study, the high-school teacher of retail selling will find invaluable *Bulletin No. 22*, "Retail Selling," by Lucinda W. Prince, issued in Commercial Education Series No. 1 by the Federal Board of Vocational Education, Washington, D.C. This bulletin treats comprehensively all phases of the subject from the standpoint of the author's experience in establishing retail selling as a high-school course in the Boston schools.

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# A TEXTBOOK ON RETAIL SELLING

## CHAPTER I

### STORES AND STOREKEEPING

**The old policy.** Within a century the business of store-keeping has undergone marked changes, no departure from the earlier practice being more important or more noticeable than the present tendency to absolute honesty in buying and selling. For more than half of the nineteenth century fixed prices were unknown. Bargaining was a universal custom. Goods were marked with two sets of letters: one gave the cost of an article to the merchant; the other, the *lowest* price for which the article might be sold. As neither set of signs was intelligible to the customer, he was at the mercy of a shrewd salesman whose success, in the estimation of his employer, was in proportion to his unscrupulousness. The "asking" price—always an excessive sum which few would be so foolish as to pay—and the "taking" price—that which would be ultimately accepted, if necessary—were often widely separated, so much so that time was wasted and distrust engendered while a price which neither party to the transaction considered robbery was agreed upon. As a matter of course every salesman tried to wring from

the customer a sum as near the "asking" price as possible. Sometimes the difference between the amount finally obtained and the "taking" price was conferred upon the astute salesman as a bonus, a practice which naturally encouraged extortion. The most able salesman, according to the standard of those days, was the one who gave the least possible value in return for the customer's money. The worth of honesty as a controlling policy was apparently utterly disregarded. A man was justified in making any statement, no matter how false, that would sell the goods. There is an old story of a customer who desired to purchase an India shawl like one worn by a prominent social leader.

The clerk showed her one at \$400. It was contemptuously pushed aside as too cheap. This being the costliest one in the place, the man behind the counter was nonplused, — but only for a moment! Whisking it up and disappearing behind a pile of prints, he returned with the same shawl, priced at \$1000, and promptly completed the sale.<sup>1</sup>

This is probably not an exaggerated instance of the business methods of sixty years ago.

Some merchants employed men called "barkers," whose duty it was to force people inside who had no intention of entering the store. Once within, it was made difficult, if not impossible, for them to escape without a purchase. Without compunction salespeople worked off, on the ignorant and ingenuous, old or imperfect merchandise at the price of desirable new goods, such tactics being accounted greatly to their credit. That some merchants were, however, inclined

<sup>1</sup> From the "Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores."

toward honest methods even in those times is shown by the concluding paragraph of an advertisement which appeared in the *New York Tribune* in June, 1849 :

B—— and C—— trust that an inspection of the above [merchandise] and of their entire stock will prove advantageous to those wishing the best stock at the lowest prices. An examination will not imply the slightest *obligation to purchase*, and every article will be *truthfully represented*.<sup>1</sup>

**Higher prices in the old days.** Merchandise cost more in those earlier days than it does now (except when war, catastrophe, or some other abnormal event greatly lowers the purchasing power of a dollar), one reason being that much of it was imported.

A merchant wrote thus concerning the period 1818–1832 :

Nearly all dry goods were imported ; our calicoes or prints came in square hair trunks, containing fifty pieces each ; very few goods came in boxes — they were either in trunks or in bales. We had a few domestic cottons, but they were all woven by hand. Power looms were not introduced until a few years later. Our common cottons were all from India, and called India "hum-hums"; they had very strange names such as Bafturs, Gurros, etc. . . . Our cloths and cassimeres were all imported. Large quantities of silks from

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to compare with this a notice which recently appeared in the several departments of a well-known Eastern store. A parallel idea is more fully and forcibly expressed in these words :

Looking incurs no obligation to buy.

Many customers are afraid of hurting a salesperson's feelings and hence take something they do not want and often do not keep. We much prefer that our customers say "I will not purchase to-day" than buy because the salesperson has been courteous and attentive.

Don't be afraid to say "No!"

France and Italy, and beautiful crêpes and satins for ladies' wear, were brought from India and China.<sup>1</sup>

The higher prices of the past century are also partly accounted for by the fact that manufacturing was then less well developed than now; the volume of business was much smaller; trade was more seasonal; fashions changed less frequently; competition was less keen; in general, the *quality* of goods was better. Another contributing cause of great importance was the organization of trade. In its passage from the producer to the consumer merchandise was handled by many agencies commonly known as "middlemen," and the percentage which each agent received for his services inevitably increased the cost of the goods to the merchant. To a great extent middlemen's profits are now eliminated by the direct dealing of retailers with manufacturers. Some firms further cheapen production by manufacturing certain lines of goods for themselves, in this way combining manufacturing and retailing in one business.

**Working conditions.** Conditions of employment have changed greatly in a hundred years. All work in mercantile establishments was done exclusively by men and boys until about 1855, when women were first given employment in stores. Public opinion promptly rose against this innovation, for the entrance of women into the realm of business was considered both undignified and improper. It is said that an attempt was made to boycott the store of a certain Maine merchant who was the first in the town of Saco to take the opprobrious step of hiring *female* help. He is said

<sup>1</sup> This quotation and the one on the next page are from "William E. Dodge: The Christian Merchant," by Carlos Martyn. Copyright by Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York.



to have defended himself by stating his belief that "woman is the natural equal of man, and that if given the same opportunity and training she will prove his equal in all the walks of life in which physical strength and endurance are not the only requisites for a successful career."

Boys usually began a mercantile career when very young by serving a period of apprenticeship, during which time they were paid little or nothing, although they worked hard for considerably more than an eight-hour day at every conceivable kind of job. Mr. William E. Dodge, a successful New York merchant of the nineteenth century, described his experiences when a lad of thirteen, just entering the business world, as follows :

I had to go every morning to Vandewater Street for the keys, as my employers must have them in case of fire in the night. There was much ambition among the young men as to who should have his store opened first, and I used to be up soon after light, walk to Vandewater Street, and then to the store very early. It had to be sprinkled with water, which I brought the evening before from the old pump at the corner of Peck Slip and Pearl Street, then carefully swept and dusted. Then came sprinkling the sidewalk and street, and sweeping to the center a heap for the dirt cart to remove. This done, one of the older clerks would come, and I would be permitted to go home for breakfast. In winter the wood was to be carried and piled in the cellar, fires were to be made, and lamps trimmed.

Custom, competition, changed conditions and standards of living, and, perhaps most influential of all, an altered point of view resulting in needed labor legislation, have made the lot of the young worker incomparably easier, safer, pleasanter, and more remunerative than it was even a generation ago.

**Evolution of the department store.** What was the forerunner of the modern department store? Some writers assert that it was the natural outgrowth of the "one-line" specialty house, it being manifest that several lines brought together under one roof could be operated more cheaply than single lines in separate stores. Others, and they are in the majority, trace its origin to the general, or crossroads, store of rural districts. The village store has been often ridiculed for its motley assortment of wares, — tea and shoe strings, gingham and schoolbooks, sugar and pencils, side by side, — many unrelated articles assembled in a room or two. Yet a department store is an elaborate development of the idea and principle of the country store and occupies in the community a position of usefulness and convenience very like that of its modest progenitor.

Mr. Edward A. Filene of Boston explains the evolution of the department store as follows :<sup>1</sup>

The small general store was one of the first ways of assembling goods that were generally wanted but which were made at a distance, the purpose being to make it easier for people to come to a central place to select what they wanted. The department store was a later evolution. Why should it have come at all when the country store had the stock and the advantage of being in the field long ahead of the department store? The chief reason is that the country store, being a small store, dealt with a limited patronage. It could buy only in small quantities, and the cost of the articles it sold was largely increased by an unnecessary number of middlemen between the producer and itself. The country store bought of a local jobber or near-by city jobber, who usually

<sup>1</sup> From a lecture delivered before the Filene Coöperative Association, June, 1916.



A CROSSROADS STORE IN A NEW ENGLAND VILLAGE

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—

bought of a big jobber, who in turn bought of the manufacturer's agent; so that four steps were involved from the manufacturer to the country store. Moreover, because it was possible to get goods in very small quantities, . . . the number of small stores was excessive and the variety and amount of stock in each such store not big.

This small-store method of distribution, with its excessive number of stores and limitations on its stock, was expensive and allowed the coming of the department store, a more successful method of doing business. For the department store makes possible the buying or producing of goods in large quantities and tends more and more to eliminate the middleman. It is aided by the fact that it can sell goods in larger quantities; its publicity is larger and more easily accomplished, coming in part from its location and the size of the building the store occupies. . . . The percentage of expense allowed for publicity in big stores permits of pages and double pages in the newspapers and forces the name upon the attention of people, while the same percentage allowed by the small stores gives them only a small advertisement which is often lost among the very extensive advertisements of the big stores.<sup>1</sup>

**Pioneer department stores.** The Bon Marché in Paris, established by M. Aristide Boucicaut in 1863 (but not departmentalized until 1869), is generally conceded to have been the first department store in the world. There appears to exist some doubt as to the first store in the United States to be established on department-store lines. This distinction is conferred by many upon the A. T. Stewart store (now

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Filene has since declared that "even with all of these advantages in retail distribution through the department store, there is too large an increase in the price of goods from producer to consumer. Unless we study to eliminate some of these expenses, other types of stores, like the chain stores, perhaps, will largely supersede the department store."

occupied by John Wanamaker) of New York City. In 1862 Mr. Stewart, a native Irishman, who had been a merchant in New York since 1823, built a store in which he conducted a very successful business on a scale large for the times. The limit of the building was set at six stories because that was thought to be the greatest height compatible with safety. Other well-known department stores established about this time or a few years later were the Jordan Marsh Company of Boston, R. H. Macy and Company of New York, John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, and Marshall Field and Company of Chicago.

**Influence of the Centennial Exposition.** Mr. Wanamaker, the founder of the business which bears his name, considers that the Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia in 1876, was an important factor in the development of the department-store enterprise. On this point he has said :

The Centennial Exposition of 1876 was, in my judgment, the moving cause of a departure toward general business by single ownership. The rising tide of popular desire to assemble under one roof articles used in every home and with freedom to purchase was a constant suggestion in 1876.

And again :

The Centennial Exhibition . . . opened a new vision to the people of the United States. It was the corner stone upon which manufacturers everywhere rebuilt their businesses to new fabrics, new fashions and more courageous undertakings by reason of the lessons taught them from the exhibits of the nations of the world. The continuing outgrowth of that exhibition has revolutionized the methods of almost every class of mercantile business in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Corporations and Public Welfare," in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. XV, Supplement, May, 1900.

**The mail-order house.** Two other types of stores, the mail-order house and the chain store, are of great interest to the student of retail trade because of their unique organization and also because in the lines which they carry they are formidable competitors of department stores. The mail-order house, as its name implies, deals with its customers by mail. It buys in large quantities, carries staple goods, and, to a great extent, requires cash payments. Its trade is not affected by the weather. Many of the large expenses and risks of the regular retail stores are eliminated. No wonder the mail-order house flourishes with the added advantages, gained in recent years, of rural free delivery and of the cheaper shipping rates of the parcel-post system.<sup>1</sup>

**Chain stores.** The expression "chain stores" or "chain systems" relates to a series of stores operating under one management in many different centers. These stores specialize for the most part on one line of merchandise or on a few lines, though in some cases — notably the five-and-ten-cent stores — specialization is more a matter of price than of merchandise. Quantity-buying is an important factor in the success of this type of business as in the mail-order house. Another reason for its prosperity lies in the fact that the name alone of any well-known chain system — be it store, restaurant, or agency — has untold advertising value because of its familiarity and because it stands for a definite and well-understood kind of service.

**The store as a service center.** All types of stores exist primarily for the financial profit of the owners of the business,

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting discussion of the competition of the country store with the mail-order house, see "The Country Store," by Charles Moreau Harger, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XCV, pp. 91-98.

but certainly a modern department store should not be regarded by the public as merely a money-making institution. It is a helpful, convenient, timesaving center, giving service of many kinds. Under its expansive roof nearly every material need may be satisfied, and expert advice on a variety of subjects may be had for the asking. Customers' needs are anticipated months in advance, and every effort is made to secure the most desirable merchandise, to be available at the right time and to be sold at fair prices.

The good values offered by stores to-day, especially in ready-made clothing, frequently cause amazement. People gladly avail themselves of the opportunity to buy clothing which they could not reproduce at the same cost and which often has a style and distinction not easily attained by amateurs. It is the constant endeavor of store managers to make the task of buying commodities as easy, pleasant, convenient, and satisfactory as possible, and in so doing they serve the public in matters of everyday importance.

**The human opportunity in store work.** The attitude of the management toward the hundreds of workers employed in a store is seldom, nowadays, that of the hard taskmaster. Coöperation, rather than compulsion, is the guiding principle in the conduct of a department store, which is in reality a social center, a small world, in which lessons of fundamental importance may be learned. Young people who plan to undertake store work should endeavor to see and to appreciate from the first not simply the commercial possibilities in their positions but also the human opportunity so abundantly present in their relations with customers and fellow-workers. Nowhere will be found a more fruitful field for the study of human nature; nowhere will a spirit of helpfulness,



an attitude of gracious dignity, yield more satisfying returns. For a department store is a big economic organization, controlled, in the great majority of cases, by men of integrity and high purpose, and ministering in a most vital way to the needs of the people.

**Three famous American merchants.** In closing this chapter it is fitting to mention three eminent American merchants to whose genius modern retail trade owes some of its most progressive policies.

ALEXANDER T. STEWART (1802-1876), to whom reference has already been made, was the foremost merchant of his time in this country. His store was stocked with the best to be had in the lines represented, and anything bought at Stewart's was considered standard and was highly prized. Mr. Stewart's judgment of goods has been characterized as supreme. He was sensitive to fine distinctions in texture, touch, and color; his taste was excellent; he knew values. To-day he would be called a good merchandiser. He was ahead of his times in his uncompromising stand on two important principles:

1. To have but one price.
2. To tell the truth regarding everything he sold.

Salesmen who attempted to bargain with customers or who made false statements were summarily discharged, although such methods were commonly employed in other stores. Mr. Stewart gave as close personal supervision to the small details of his business as to the large administrative problems. In these days when the proprietor of a store is seldom seen on the floor among his patrons, it is interesting to know that for many years Mr. Stewart made it a rule to greet his customers personally, inquire their wishes, conduct them to the desired section, and accompany them to the door when they

left. The policy of giving a 10 per cent discount to clergymen and school-teachers is said to have been introduced by Mr. Stewart.

MARSHALL FIELD (1835-1906) went to Chicago in 1856 and became a salesman in a wholesale dry-goods house. Ten years from that time, when the population of Chicago had increased fivefold, Mr. Field was established in business. Endowed with extraordinary executive ability, sound judgment in financial matters, and an imagination which enabled him to anticipate situations, he built up what is said to be the largest retail business in the world. He has been described as the greatest mercantile genius that ever lived. Early in his career he learned to analyze the causes of failure and to apply scientific methods to the business of buying and selling. It is said that he never owed and never borrowed a dollar and that his immense fortune was acquired without resort to dishonorable business practice. Two of Mr. Field's fundamental principles were the avoidance of debt and a strict safeguarding of credit. His merchandising policy is expressed in the phrase, "Better the quality at the price," a policy which has been developed in part by the establishment of factories, both here and abroad, controlled by Marshall Field and Company. Mr. Field was a benefactor of many institutions, but he is chiefly remembered as a sovereign merchant, and the vast store which bears his name is his greatest monument.

JOHN WANAMAKER (1837- ). Ever since Mr. Wanamaker established his large store in Philadelphia in 1876 he has been a leading figure in the mercantile world. His business career may be said to have begun in 1861, when he became a partner in the prosecution of a successful clothing business. At this time, when moral standards in business were still on a questionable basis, Mr. Wanamaker took a resolute stand for honest dealing and initiated many

progressive policies which are now widely prevalent. In 1865 he established the fixed-price principle and in the same year promulgated the revolutionizing idea of return of goods and refund of purchase money. In 1896 he instituted the summer Saturday half-holiday. In 1896, also, Mr. Wanamaker bought the A. T. Stewart business and opened his New York store in the original Stewart building. A complete enumeration of Mr. Wanamaker's reforms and innovations cannot be given here, but there is no doubt that his sound and advanced policies have profoundly influenced the development of modern business conditions. Once, when asked for a sketch of his life, he replied by telegraph, "Thinking, toiling, and trusting in God is all of my biography."

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Give the exact names of all the department stores in this city.
2. Make a classification of these stores on the basis of grade of merchandise carried ; for example, high, medium, and low-priced.
3. Name a leading specialty shop, or "one-line" house, in this city for the following kinds of merchandise :

Rugs and carpets	Office supplies
Furniture	Sporting goods
Leather goods	Fine laces and embroideries
Oriental goods	Cutlery
Pictures	Millinery
Glass and china	Art embroidery
Stationery	Books
Trunks and bags	Music
Kitchen goods	Waists
Gloves	Rubber goods
Confectionery	Shoes
Optical goods	Men's clothing

4. Compare a department store with a large five-and-ten-cent store. What advantages are offered by the latter? Name any features which seem undesirable.

5. What kinds of goods are excluded from most department stores?

6. What advantages besides a saving of time and certain conveniences are enjoyed by patrons of department stores?

7. Give the names and locations of two well-known mail-order houses.

8. Give the names of chain stores dealing in merchandise of the following types:

Five-and-ten-cent goods

Drugs

Groceries

Tea

Shoes

9. What do you consider the most distinctive feature of each of the chain stores mentioned?

10. What is barter? Name any countries in which this custom is still prevalent.

11. In what European countries is the bargaining system still in use?

12. Report anything you have heard, or know from personal observation, concerning the following famous stores:

Marshall Field's, Chicago

John Wanamaker's, Philadelphia and New York

Selfridge's, London

Liberty and Company, London

Bon Marché, Paris

13. Before the introduction of modern methods of retailing, it is said that the attitude of merchants was expressed by the Latin words *caveat emptor*. What is the meaning of these words? Explain their application.

14. Name some lines of merchandise for which the demand is distinctly seasonal.

15. Try to account for the fact that trade was more seasonal (there were more months of dull business) sixty years ago than at the present time.

16. Justify the high prices charged for imported merchandise.

17. Express your views concerning the frequent changes of fashion of to-day. Consider the question from the standpoint of (1) business; (2) economy; (3) ethics.

18. Give three reasons why department-store work, especially selling, is suited to women.

19. Why do you think it was considered unsuitable work for women sixty years ago?

20. What did the Centennial Exposition celebrate? Why was it held in Philadelphia?

21. Explain how, according to Mr. Wanamaker's theory, the Centennial Exposition stimulated business.

22. What other great expositions have been held in this country since 1876? What did they celebrate?

23. Give the names of business men who have attained eminence in this city. State any striking characteristics which might account for their success.

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. In your notebook make a tabulated comparison of the country general store and the city department store with which you are most familiar. Give the name and location of the store in each case. If you are not personally acquainted with a typical country store, a suburban dry-goods store may be substituted. The topics listed below should be covered. Add any other topics which may occur to you.

a. Size (that is, number of floors); approximate area covered

b. External appearance

Style of architecture

Surroundings

Entrance

- c. Internal appearance
  - Arrangement of merchandise
  - Lighting
  - Heating
  - Orderliness and cleanliness
  - Atmosphere or spirit
- d. Grade of merchandise carried
  - (Quote a few comparative prices, if possible)
- e. Competition
- f. Personal element in transactions
  - Relate incidents illustrative of favors shown or special service rendered, if possible .
- g. Characterize the place in the community which each store fills
- h. Summarize, giving the advantages and disadvantages, as you see them, of each class of store as
  - A place of employment
  - A place of purchase

If possible, illustrate your outline with kodak pictures or with sketches of the exterior and interior of each store.

2. Obtain a mail-order house catalogue, read the introductory matter carefully, and look over the pages describing the merchandise. Write a paper comparing the mail-order house with the department store from the customer's standpoint.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SALES CHECK AND OTHER FORMS

Wherever large numbers of people are involved in any enterprise a more or less elaborate system of record-keeping becomes necessary. Public-school authorities, for example, demand frequent, detailed reports of the department, attendance, and scholarship of the many pupils in annual school attendance. Librarians make use of a careful card system in keeping track of the books lent to residents. Those who wish to enjoy the privileges of these and other public institutions are obliged to conform to certain rules, for a system of some kind is absolutely necessary if order is to prevail.

**The sales book.** Full and accurate records are of particular importance when money is handled. For department stores the methodical sales book has been evolved as the most satisfactory means of recording the essential facts of every sale.

To the uninitiated the filling out of a sales check may seem to be useless red tape. Salespeople sometimes rebel against the labor inevitably bound up with its operation, and customers often chafe when subjected to unavoidable delays occasioned by the exactions of the system. It is unfortunate that the function of the sales check as protection to customer, salesperson, and firm is not more generally understood. A brief description of the different parts of the sales book — the familiar symbol of stores both large and small — is a necessary preliminary to the explanation of its use. Since

the books used by different stores vary in respect to many details, only a general description will be attempted here.

**Parts of the sales book.** There is first the cover, usually stoutly constructed of cardboard and leather. Inside, held in place by a metal-spring device, is the series of sales checks, or, as the arrangement is sometimes designated, "the book." A sheet called variously a record, tally, or index, on which the amount of each sale is recorded, is inserted somewhere in the cover. The sales must be totaled at the end of the day. A sheet of carbon paper insures two copies of the sales record. If a third copy is required, a double-faced carbon and a set of tissue sheets are provided. In the first case, the sale is said to be made out in duplicate; in the second, in triplicate. In some stores three different forms of sales check are in use, according to the kind of sale, whether cash, charge, or C.O.D. Many stores use two forms: one for cash sales and another for charge and C.O.D. sales; while a simple system, and one which is convenient from the standpoint of the salesperson, provides one slip so arranged as to meet the requirements of all sales.

**Parts of the sales check.** The sales check used by department stores is usually made up of six different parts. These parts are, in general, as follows:

#### ORIGINAL CHECK

1. *Shipping ticket*: pasted on outside of bundle if purchase is sent; not used otherwise.
2. *Sales ticket*: the store's record; filed in auditing office.
3. *Cashier's voucher or receipt*: record kept by cashier and used in balancing accounts at night; ultimately turned over to auditing office.



NAME OF STORE			STAMP	
DEPT	SALES NO.			DATE
12	8			5-15-19
NAME <i>Mrs. George N. Richardson</i>				
ADDRESS <i>47 55 Linden Street</i>				
D37690 <i>Ashmont</i>				
SHIP VIA <i>Mass.</i>				

NAME <i>Mrs. George N. Richardson</i>				
ADDRESS <i>55 Linden Street</i>				
D 37690 <i>47 Ashmont, Mass.</i>				
NAME <i>Miss D. F. Richardson</i>				
DEPT	SALES NO.	DATE	EXTRA PRG.	How Sold or Sent Back
12	8	5-15-19		<i>Chg.</i>
2	<i>Belts</i>	<i>1.75</i>		<i>3.50</i>
1	<i>"</i>			<i>1.00</i>
				<i>4.50</i>
			TOTAL	<i>4.50</i>

CASHIER'S VOUCHER	DEPT	SALES NO.	TOTAL AMOUNT OF SALE	
	12	8		
D 37690 <i>47 Chg.</i>			<i>4.50</i>	
<small>HOW SOLD or AMOUNT SENT BACK</small>				

A TYPICAL DEPARTMENT-STORE SALES CHECK

A charge-sent sale

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## DUPLICATE CHECK

1. *Duplicate of shipping ticket*: if made out, filed in shipping department for reference.
2. *Duplicate of sales ticket*: wrapped with merchandise purchased.
3. *Salesperson's voucher or receipt*: salesperson obtains this from cashier after it has been stamped and preserves it the specified length of time.

**The sales check as protection.** It will be seen that every person concerned in a sale of merchandise has something to show for it. The customer finds a receipt in his bundle; the salesperson and cashier have their vouchers; if the goods are sent, the shipping department has its record; and finally, the firm, through the auditing office, receives the details of the transaction and may, at any time, ascertain the true condition of the business from the records drawn off from the checks. Thus, in case of a dispute or misunderstanding, it is a relatively simple matter to establish the facts, to place responsibility for errors, and to correct them. The system is so carefully guarded at every point that it is difficult to violate. Salespeople are sometimes unmindful of the protection thus afforded, failing to realize that an employee who follows all rules and carries out his part of the system with fidelity to every detail is ordinarily beyond suspicion.

**Specific facts called for.** A study of the sales check of any department store will reveal the fact that certain information is always called for and must be supplied in spaces set apart for the purpose. Some facts are recorded more than once. A typical sales check calls for

1. Salesperson's number (sometimes stamped or perforated);
2. Department number (sometimes stamped or perforated);
3. Number of extra or private packages inclosed.

4. Amount of money received or, if not a cash purchase, the kind of sale.
5. Total amount of sale.
6. Quantity sold.
7. Name of article sold.
8. Price of article sold.
9. Date.

A serial number indicates the special issue or edition of sales checks to which a given check belongs, and another number indicates the place of each check in the series of fifty of which every book is composed.

Some checks call for one or more of these additional facts :

1. Total number of pieces sold.
2. Model (or style) number of article sold.
3. Invoice number.

In all except cash sales, in which the bundle is delivered to the customer in person at the store (known as "cash delivered" or "cash take" sales), names and addresses must be obtained. Other information, such as suite number or room number, special means of transportation, and the name of the person who made the purchase, may be required in certain cases.

The sales check, in its present form, is the product of long and careful study of the needs of large stores. Each space is arranged as it is because of a good reason based on experience. If a question of legality should arise concerning a sales transaction, the sales checks involved might be taken into court as constituting "books of original entry." This in itself is enough to show how extremely important it is that checks be made out accurately and clearly. Aside from the possibility of legal proceedings, careful work on the part

of all who have any connection with the sales checks is necessary to the successful operation of the system. An understanding of the prescribed forms, the reasons back of them, and the correct way to make them out to the smallest detail is most essential. Those who write the checks must write legibly. And finally, a good, well-pointed pencil is the indispensable tool which the good workman will not neglect or overlook.

**Important rules.** Of store rules one of the most rigid is the following :

Sales checks must not be altered or erased. If an error is made or a change is necessary, call a floor manager and ask him to make the check void. A new check may then be made out.

The reason for this rule is clear. If any except authorized persons were allowed to make changes in the checks after they were made out, no dependence could be placed on the records, and the way would be opened for malpractice and abuse of the system. Moreover, hurried erasures and the careless marking over of letters and figures increase the difficulties of office workers and often lead to disastrous guesswork on their part. Another important rule is that requiring salespeople to read back to the customer the name and address, when they are given. In addition, salespeople are advised, and often required, to *show* the address as they have written it. In this way the address is verified in two ways — by appealing to the customer through the ear and through the eye. The following authentic cases of carelessness, first, in listening, and second, in failure to verify the address, show how necessary it is to take every precaution.

CORRECT NAME	NAME WRITTEN BY SALESPERSON
S. H. Eldridge	S. H. L. Rich
Charles Eastman	Charles E. Smith
A. A. Cutting	A. A. Patten
F. A. L. Potter	F. A. O'Connor
J. J. Bartlett	J. J. Barclay
S. J. Boylan	F. H. Bailey

When such errors occur, and they are all too common, the merchandise is held until the difficulty is discovered and corrected. But in the meantime customers become impatient, may refuse to accept the goods when finally delivered, and may even withdraw their accounts if the delay has caused great inconvenience.

When a common name like Smith or Brown is given, special care should be taken to get the initials precisely right. There might be many Smiths and Browns among a store's charge customers, and a slight inaccuracy in any one of the names would be likely to give rise to much trouble and delay.

In some stores the use of the word "city" as the final word of the address is prohibited because it has been found to cause misunderstanding and confusion. In one case this word was so badly written as to be taken for "California," and in another case it became involved with the figures and was taken for a figure, the amount of the sale being actually increased one dollar thereby.

Care should also be taken in the matter of giving the correct name to an article sold. When a customer found the item "1 Brush" on his bill the first of the month, he returned the bill for adjustment, asserting that he had not bought a brush. It was found that the item with which he

was charged was a book entitled "The Sagebrush Parson." Under the circumstances an item reading "1 Book" would have been far more intelligible to the customer than "1 Brush," but the best form would have been "1 Book — 'The Sagebrush Parson.'"

Here is another striking example from the same department. An item on a customer's bill read "Groceries, \$1.35." She reported to the office that she had never bought groceries at the store in question. The head of the adjustment department looked up the original charge check and found that it read "1 puddin', \$1.35." He showed the check to the customer, but she insisted that she had purchased no groceries. He then noticed the department number on the check, which was that of the book department. The customer had bought a copy of "Puddin' Head Wilson." Investigations necessary for the adjustment of such matters entail much expense and are a source of great annoyance to customers.

**Common forms of the sales check.** The simplest forms of sales are the following:

1. *Cash take, or cash delivered*: the customer pays for the merchandise and takes it out of the store with him.
2. *Cash sent*: the customer pays for the merchandise, but the store delivers it at his home.
3. *Charge sent*: the merchandise is charged and sent to the customer's home.
4. *C. O. D.*: like a charge-sent sale except that the customer pays for the merchandise when it is delivered at his home.

Certain sales cannot be accepted at the desk until they are authorized by a floor manager. Such sales involve an element of risk, or require special arrangements or an

assumption of authority not within the province of a salesperson. It may be said in general that any irregular sale must be submitted to the floor manager for authorization.

**Sales requiring authorization.** In most stores the floor manager's signature is required for the following kinds of sales :<sup>1</sup>

1. Merchandise *charged* to one address and *sent* to another.
2. Merchandise charged and delivered over the counter without identification coin.
3. Discount sales to clergymen, dressmakers, institutions, employees of the house, etc.
4. *Future (or future-date) sales.* Merchandise held by the store until a certain date at the customer's request.
5. *Part paid C. O. D.* Customers sometimes make a deposit on merchandise bought, paying the balance due when the goods are delivered. Some stores require a deposit on all C. O. D. purchases.
6. Allowance of price on damaged or imperfect goods ("As Is").
7. Even and uneven exchanges, including credit slips.
8. Extra or private packages to be inclosed with a purchase made in the store.
9. Void checks.
10. Price tags removed and sales checks not inclosed with merchandise.
11. Customer's own property or goods. Applies chiefly to repairs.
12. Merchandise worn or taken out of the store without being wrapped.

<sup>1</sup> Students should copy these headings into their notebooks, and as they learn the significance of each sale, they should explain in writing why the signature is needed in each case. Concrete examples should be given. The list is by no means exhaustive, but covers the forms commonly met in department stores.



13. *Special delivery.*

14. Check, money order, express order, or traveler's order given in payment.

15. *C. O. D. Allow examination.* A customer may keep merchandise for a specified period, at the expiration of which the driver calls and receives either the merchandise or its cash value.

16. *Deposit sales.* On payment of a deposit merchandise may sometimes be held in the store until a certain date when the customer pays the full amount due.

**The transfer.** One type of sale, known variously as a traveler, transfer, shopping card, or till-book sale, requires special explanation. The term "transfer" will be used here, as that expression seems as logical as any. A transfer is planned with particular reference to two types of sales:

1. One in which the customer lives at some distance from the city and intends to buy more than one article.

2. One in which the customer, irrespective of residence, intends to buy several articles.

These two cases will be clearer if examples are given.

A customer comes to a city from a small town thirty miles distant for a day's shopping. As time is limited and there is much to do, it is not practicable to go about from store to store buying one article here and another there. If the goods are satisfactory, the customer will buy as much as possible in one store.

A good illustration of the second case is that of a mother who brought with her to a toy department the letters which her five children had written to Santa Claus telling what they wanted for Christmas. This customer bought every one of the twenty articles on the lists, spending nearly two hours in the big department while she made the selection.

In both of the situations described, it would be to the customer's advantage to use a transfer, because

1. This provides for the assembling of the purchases at a central desk, where they are wrapped securely in one bundle.
2. If it is a cash sale, the total amount due is paid at the end instead of separate payments being made as each section is visited.
3. If the goods are to be sent, they reach the customer's home at one time and all together instead of in separate lots delivered at different times.

Thus, convenience and a saving of time are the advantages enjoyed by the user of the transfer.

To the store the benefits are the following :

1. A saving of labor and of wrapping materials, since one large bundle is wrapped instead of many small ones.
2. A saving on express charges in the event of sent sales.
3. The tendency on the part of a customer who buys on a transfer to purchase as much as possible in one store instead of going elsewhere for some of her needs.

**The want, or call, slip.** Another form which salespeople should understand and use is the *want*, or *call*, slip, to be filled out whenever a customer asks for something which the department or the store is unable to supply. Eventually these slips are turned over to the merchandise manager and the buyer of the department concerned, to whom they indicate the demand for stock which is not carried. They may also show that certain lines of goods which had been dropped should be re-ordered. Salespeople who do not understand the significance of this slip sometimes fail to give the needed facts in form sufficiently clear, full, and explicit. Spaces are usually provided for such items as size, color, style, price, and material, and a few lines are left

## WANT

HOW NEARLY SUPPLIED

SIZE

30

COLOR

Dark-green

STYLE

Regular coat  
sweater

PRICE

\$ 10

DEPT. 30 SALES NO. 16 DATE 5-15-19

NAME

Mrs. Walter T. Thayer

ADDRESS

48 Washington Place Boston

PHONE NO.

Beach 6992 W

ARTICLE

Boy's heavy green sweater with V neck  
 Customer found just what she wanted  
 at Smith's at \$15.

STYLE V-neck

SIZE

30

PRICE

Not over \$10

COLOR

Very dark green

ORDER NO.

DISAPPROVED

ON ORDER

APPROVED RETAIL

APPROVED WHOLESALE

(These spaces are for buyer's notes)

THE WANT SLIP OF ONE DEPARTMENT STORE

4

blank for any special description of the article called for or any helpful information given by the customer, such as the fact that the article desired may be bought at some other store at a certain price. "Was the sale lost?" and "Did you substitute?" or "What merchandise was substituted," are questions sometimes asked. Some slips provide blanks for the customer's name, address, and telephone number, so that notification may be sent, if desired, when the article is received in stock. Whatever the form, the slip should be filled out as intelligently and completely as possible. *Every* call should be recorded, even though some may seem unimportant; and if there are several calls for the same article during the day, either a separate slip should be made out for each one or the number of calls for the article in question should be recorded on a single slip according to directions.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. How should the carbon sheet be placed in relation to the edges of a sales check? Why?
2. What kind of pencil — number, price, and length — do you recommend for the writing of sales checks?
3. Why is it advisable to have at least two pencils ready for use at the beginning of a day of selling?
4. Describe the proper way to sharpen a pencil.
5. Obtain a tally sheet (or record) from your teacher or from a store, and explain its use fully.
6. In what different forms may the date be written? What is the most approved form for a sales check? Why?
7. Make a set of figures, then criticize your performance from the standpoint of clearness. Give a few minutes' daily practice to the making of any figures which are not perfectly clear.

8. Explain the importance of recording the suite number of a customer who lives in an apartment house. What should be recorded if a customer is staying at a hotel? Why?

9. In certain departments of some stores the article bought by a customer is placed with the sales check in a cloth bag, in which it is transferred to the examiner's desk. What are the advantages of such an arrangement? Do you see any disadvantages in it?

10. Why may not a salesperson destroy an imperfect check instead of having it made void by the floor manager?

11. What errors are likely to be made in sales checks through the carelessness of salespeople?

12. In repeating the street number, why is it advisable to use the method of the telephone, saying "three-one-six" instead of "three sixteen"?

13. Write the names and complete addresses of six of your friends. Underline those words or parts of words which are difficult to spell. Inclose in brackets those which might easily be misunderstood.

14. Make a list of names of your city streets which might be confused because of similarity in sound.

15. Make a similar list of suburbs and towns.

16. Study carefully the abbreviations of the names of all the states in the Union, placing in groups those which look most alike.

17. Salespeople are sometimes required to print the capital letters in an address. Try this method with your own address. What advantages has the plan? Are there any disadvantages?

18. What is meant by a model number? an invoice number?

19. Suggest ways in which the use of the word "city" for the *name* of a place might cause misunderstanding.

20. Outline the probable steps taken in investigating the item "1 Brush."

21. Who was chiefly responsible for this needless expenditure of time and effort?

22. How is the number of pieces estimated in the following?

A man's suit	A tool chest containing tools
A pair of stockings	A pair of shoes
A pair of gloves	A box of handkerchiefs
A nest of blocks	A box of envelopes
A set of books	A set of golf sticks

23. After you have completed a sale, what may you do to prepare your book for the next sale?

24. Count the number of Smiths listed in the telephone book. Do you find any subscribers of this name having the same, or nearly the same, initials?

25. Salespeople should stand as erect as possible when making out sales checks. Why is a salesperson at a physical disadvantage when he bends far over his book in order to write on a low counter? What are any other disadvantages of such a position?

26. Why is it desirable that the salesperson's line of vision be more nearly on a level with his customer's?

27. Why should the amount of money received from the customer be "named back" by the salesperson?

28. In ascertaining the kind of sale, which form of inquiry is better:

- a. "Cash?" or "Do you wish to pay for this?"
- b. "Charge?" or "Have you an account?"

Give reasons in each case.

29. What is an identification coin?

30. Why must a salesperson see the coin and copy the number?

31. What reasons for future-date sales can you suggest?

32. At what season of the year are future-date sales most likely to occur? Why?

33. In the case of sale goods sent C.O.D. a deposit of 25 per cent of the value (part payment) is sometimes required. What is the reason for this? Some stores require a similar deposit when goods are set aside or reserved. Why?

34. Why is the signature of the buyer, as well as that of the floor manager, usually required for allowance of price on goods which are imperfect?

35. What is meant by an uneven exchange? Give an example.

36. In most stores salespeople are required to call a floor manager to open a package containing merchandise brought in for credit or exchange. Why should the package not be opened by the salesperson?

37. Account for the following restrictions imposed by some stores with reference to the inclosure of private packages:

*a.* Packages containing breakable, perishable, or inflammable articles not accepted.

*b.* No bulky merchandise sent that was bought in other stores.

*c.* Goods bought in the bargain basement not sent with merchandise bought upstairs in the same store.

38. A salesperson is sometimes required to write the customer's name and address on a private package which is to be inclosed. Give a reason for this rule.

39. At what season of the year are salespeople most likely to be requested to remove price tags and omit sales checks?

40. Why are examiners required to look at the price tag and compare it with the record on the sales check before wrapping bundles?

41. When a customer takes merchandise out of the store without having it wrapped, why is he advised to keep the sales check (his receipt) in sight until he has passed out of the store?

42. How does a bank check differ from a money order?

43. Why must a floor manager be called when either is offered in payment?

44. Find out the average cost of delivery of a bundle within the ten-mile limit.

45. Discuss the relative advantages of express and parcel post.

46. Compare the fruit vender's system of making sales and disposing of cash receipts with that of a department store. Why must the latter be far more elaborate?



47. What advantages has the fruit vender's easy-going method? What disadvantages?

48. Under what conditions is a cash register more satisfactory for sales records than a sales book?

49. Name six departments in which you have observed cash registers in use.

NOTE TO TEACHER. In connection with this lesson, drill should be given in the writing of the simplest forms of the sales check, such as cash delivered, cash sent, charge sent. The more complicated forms should be studied in later lessons. For at least one sale in each exercise, pupils should be required to stand and write with only the cover of the sales book for support.

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Begin a collection of sales checks or parts of checks from as many different stores as possible. Blank sales checks are not given away (unless canceled), but if you or any member of your family make a purchase, save the slips from the inside and outside of the bundle. Paste the slips into your notebook and label them. Study carefully the points covered by each and observe critically the way in which each check is written. Compare each check with the sales check which you use in school.

2. Observe and make a written report on the making out of a sales check by a salesperson in at least three different stores, keeping the following points in mind:

- a.* Speed of writing.
- b.* Position while writing.
- c.* Condition of pencil.
- d.* If address is taken,
  - (1) Is it read back?
  - (2) Is it shown?
  - (3) Is it clearly enunciated?
- e.* Legibility of writing.

In general, criticize this part of the salesperson's work from the standpoint of good form.

## CHAPTER III

### APPEARANCE AND DEPORTMENT OF SALESPeOPLE

Upon entering a store one is conscious of a certain character or personality which distinguishes that store from all others. One store, for instance, may be described as exclusive or elegant, another as homelike and democratic, while a third may seem cheap and tawdry in contrast with a neighboring unobtrusive establishment where everything is in quiet, good taste. This difference in atmosphere may be accounted for in various ways. The spirit and policy of the management influence it to some extent ; the character of the merchandise and tastefulness of the display are other factors ; but perhaps no one element has more to do with giving a store its *tone* than the salespeople behind its counters.

Personality and character cannot be apprehended in a momentary glance ; but only a very little time is needed to judge of a person's appearance, and those who know us only superficially get their chief impression of us — perhaps their only one — from the important externals of appearance.

**Proper clothing for work.** The provision of proper clothing, that which is suited in all ways to the work undertaken, is a matter which every salesperson, man or woman, should consider seriously. An employer has a right to demand of his workers the very best of which they are capable in appearance, as in effort and interest. It is quite possible that after taking a position a salesperson may be obliged to

spend the greater part of his clothing budget on clothes to be worn during working hours, and that the portion of the wardrobe which hitherto had perhaps seemed the more important, apparel worn evenings and Sundays, may suffer in consequence. If any part of the wardrobe is to be sacrificed, it must certainly not be the business garb. The clothes selected for business should be of serviceable material, well-cut and well-made, of no conspicuous color or style, and should be fashioned to suit the personality and build of the wearer.

A selling position is more exacting in its clothing requirements than some other business positions, because a salesperson is on view all the time and subject to the scrutiny of a critical public. Moreover, if ready-made clothing is being sold, the salesperson whose own clothing is shabby, or untidy, or in poor taste suffers by contrast. There is also the question of bright colors to be considered. Most stores require their salespeople to wear black or very dark colors during the greater part of the year, because uniformity looks well and also because dark, neutral tones make a good background for the merchandise, which necessarily represents a wide range of color.

**Dress requirements.** In an effort to bring about a certain standard of dress for salespeople, definite rules and requirements have been laid down by most stores. In general, saleswomen are asked to avoid wearing the following:

1. Bright colors in every detail of the costume. (Dresses of black or navy blue are required in many stores except during the summer, when white waists may be worn.)
2. Bracelets, necklaces, and earrings.
3. Badges and campaign buttons.

As custom permits less variety in the garb of men than in that of women, they are in less danger of offending the canons of good taste and propriety in respect to clothing, yet one large store has found it necessary to insert the following in its book of rules :

Men will avoid unusual color combinations of hosiery and neckwear, and loud, flashy apparel. When not wearing vests in warm weather, they will always keep their coats buttoned. They will be no less careful than the women in avoiding extreme styles in dress, unbusinesslike jewelry, campaign buttons, and strong perfumery.

**Dignity of uniformity.** Stores in which rules concerning dress are enforced have a certain dignity which is always a by-product of uniformity. The reasons for such dress requirements are not always understood, and sometimes salespeople, more especially the women, object to appearing in the sober colors, serviceable materials, and conservative styles which the store managers consider appropriate. Yet these objectors would never think of questioning the costume prescribed by many churches for the choir, nor would they take exception to the black academic cap and gown of colleges and universities or to the plain, formal, but almost universally becoming uniform which nurses adopt with pride upon graduation from a training school. And when the khaki-clad soldier appears, does not that uniform, which proclaims the wearer a man who is ready to give his life for his country, command respectful admiration? The uniform demanded by any calling should be regarded as elevating rather than degrading the wearer, who, in assuming certain garb, gives evidence of the possession of certain qualities needed in a given line of work.

**Cleanliness and neatness.** The color and style of costume are not the only points to be emphasized if a salesperson is to present an attractive appearance. Cleanliness of person and clothing are equally important. In cities, where dust and smoke continually fill the air, it is difficult to keep clean, and it is absolutely imperative to set apart a certain portion of the daily schedule, at night or in the morning, for the cleansing and refreshment of the body. Special attention should be given to the hands, which are made prominent by the showing of merchandise, and to the teeth, which have much to do with health and attractiveness.

When the outer clothing is removed, small repairs should be made and any necessary cleaning done. The clothing should next be brushed and then placed or hung near an open window for thorough freshening and airing.

**Personal standards in relation to work.** A store superintendent, testifying to the importance of personal neatness among the selling force, referred to a certain applicant for a selling position in this way :

Her hair was neatly dressed, her clothes were well-brushed ; she wore good shoes with straight heels, but there were spots on the front of her blouse. I knew that a woman capable of such laxness when she was seeking a position would never have the right feeling for her stock. And so of course I had to reject her.

This very point of the relation of personal standards of neatness to good stock-keeping was exemplified not long ago in a rather good little store doing a large business in newspapers, periodicals, and books and carrying in addition a stock of stationery and office supplies. This store is presided over by a man who shuffles about in unpolished, much-worn,

down-at-the-heel shoes; his hands are never clean, and his loose clothing, none too clean, has not been pressed for many a day. When a customer bought a bottle of ink of him she was not surprised, in view of the proprietor's appearance, to find the bottle covered with a thick layer of dust. One would suppose that under such circumstances the salesman would apologize for the dust and would make haste to remove it at once. Not so, however, in this case. He placed the bottle on the counter before the customer, took the money, made change at the cash register, and allowed the customer to take the bottle just as it was, *unwrapped*, out of the store. She tried to teach him a lesson by attempting to blow off some of the dust as she picked up the bottle from the counter. Such poor housekeeping is an offense and a discourtesy.

**The influence of good appearance.** It is important, then, to cultivate a good appearance in order to meet the obligations of a position which brings the worker into contact with the public. It is also important to do so in order to impress customers agreeably and to make them feel that the person serving them respects his merchandise and takes good care of it. And a third reason for strict attention to the details of personal appearance is the effect upon the individual himself. A missing button, a grease spot in a conspicuous place, the knowledge that a certain detail of clothing is not right, may have a disastrous influence on an entire day's work, because the wearer of the defective garment is annoyed and disturbed by the consciousness that he is not up to the standard in dress. A person who knows that he is well-dressed, clean, and neat has a sense of self-respect and enjoys a mental ease, which contribute not a little to his efficiency.

**Physical attitude.** It should be noted that the effect of good looks and of tasteful and appropriate dressing is greatly heightened by correct carriage of the head and body. A person who lacks physical beauty, yet holds himself well and uses his body with freedom and natural grace because his muscles are strong and well controlled, may achieve a distinction which neither beauty nor fine raiment alone can give. The physical position assumed by salespeople has much to do with their power to attract customers. A salesperson who is well "set up," alert in bearing, businesslike and responsive in attitude, naturally draws customers, because he seems to be ready for his work and equal to its demands.

The illustrations on page 45 show correct standing and sitting positions. The points to be emphasized in each case are as follows :

#### SITTING POSITION

1. Lower part of back pressed against the back of the chair.
2. Muscles of neck and spine stretched *up*.
3. Arms and hands, free from tension, rest in the lap.
4. Shoulder blades may rest against the flat upper back of the chair.
5. Feet supported in correct position.

#### STANDING POSITION

1. Feet, separated and parallel, point straight forward.
2. Feet equally support weight.
3. Muscles of neck and spine stretched *up*.
4. Arms, free from tension, hang naturally at the sides.

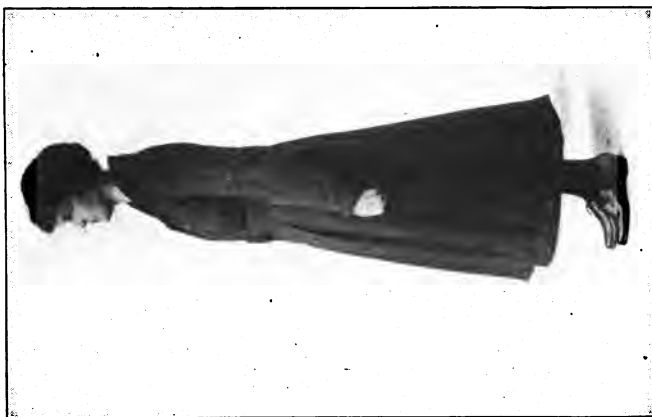
Salespeople are on their feet the greater part of the time, yet they may sit when not busy. Some of the employees

who work at desks are seated much of the day, while the work of others requires them generally to stand. It is important that all, both salespeople and office workers, learn to stand and sit correctly, for these positions influence not only appearance but health as well.

**Conduct of salespeople.** Suggestions regarding the conduct of salespeople might seem to be unnecessary, yet there is ample evidence that many have given insufficient thought to the customs and manners demanded by their position. As in any other public place, dignity, self-control, and courtesy are of great importance. The necessity for the exercise of these qualities will perhaps be more apparent if a crowded elevator be considered, a car in which both employees and customers are carried as passengers. If the employees are inconsiderate and self-seeking, if their speech or attitude betrays vulgarity, if they, as representatives of the store, show by their actions that they lack a sense of propriety, by so much is the customer's estimation of the store lowered. The contact of customers with salespeople at the counters is a like influence in the formation of impressions.

**Conversation.** If salespeople are permitted to converse among themselves when not busy, they should do so in quiet tones and without undue absorption, lest the approach of customers be unobserved. They should not gather together in close, confidential groups nor should their backs be turned to the counters or tables. Customers frequently complain of the way in which they are kept waiting while a personal conversation among salespeople is finished, or they say, if they are reluctantly approached, it is evident that the subject of the conversation is more on the salesperson's mind than the need of the customer.





CORRECT STANDING POSITION



CORRECT SITTING POSITION



Comment on the salesmanship and the lack of courtesy displayed in the following incident :

A lady entering the notion department of a store found all the salespeople gathered in one spot, listening with absorbed interest while one of the group narrated a personal experience. As no one appeared to notice her, the customer, after a few moments' delay, approached one of the girls with the remark that she would like to look at braids. The girl who was telling the story turned abruptly, withdrew from a shelf a large box containing many varieties of braid and placed it on top of other merchandise on the counter. After removing the cover, she returned to her audience and, with back turned to the customer, remarked in clearly audible tones, "Well, the next night he introduced me to his mother." The customer, after a superficial examination of the braids, left the store.

**Loud calling.** Calling, conversing, and giving directions in loud, strident tones to persons at some distance add to the noise and confusion of a store and increase the nerve strain for salespeople and customers. It is sometimes necessary to raise the voice to obtain a floor manager, but there is seldom any other reason for so doing. Instead of shouting vociferously to a messenger, "Gracie, come here and take this bundle, quick; the lady's in a hurry," it would be pleasanter for the customer and *better form* on the part of the salesperson to secure the services of the messenger in a less conspicuous way.

**Personal comment.** A tendency of salespeople to make comments on the appearance, behavior, and purpose of customers is greatly to be deprecated. Too often such remarks are overheard by patrons. Why might the following comments drive away another customer who overheard them?

"Is n't she terrible? I can't do a thing with her."

"He says he's in a hurry. Well, so am I."

[In a leather-goods section.] "Everyone who comes along disturbs my bags."

"Say, what do you think of my customer's hat?"

"Don't bother with her; she's just looking."

If a situation seems to call for disparaging remarks, they should not be made within the hearing of customers.

A man returned a lamp chimney to the grocery store at which his wife had bought it the preceding day, explaining that it had cracked within ten minutes after the lamp was lighted, and asking for another in its place. With a good deal of reluctance the salesman provided a second chimney which, unfortunately, behaved in the same manner as the first. When the customer returned the second time he was considerably annoyed by the salesman's unpleasant attitude, so much so, indeed, that he asked to see the proprietor, who, upon hearing the customer's experience, said to the salesman, "Give the gentleman another chimney." Standing only a short distance from the customer, the salesman took it upon himself to protest: "If you go on that way, everybody will be coming back for chimneys and everything else." In no uncertain tone the proprietor repeated, "Give the gentleman another chimney," and this time the salesman obeyed orders. But neither the customer nor his wife will ever trade with that salesman again.

Sometimes feelings of weariness, disappointment, or resentment are expressed in the presence of customers. Such remarks as "You took my sale!" "I shall be *thankful* if the store ever closes!" create an unpleasant atmosphere to which customers are likely to react unfavorably.

There should be avoidance of anything in speech or in manner which might seem to imply correction or discipline

of patrons of the store. Selling goods, not the training of customers, is the function of a salesperson, who may, however, by example and intelligent service teach and train a great deal. When a customer who had meant to ask for nickel-plated fixtures and thought he had done so was shown brass fixtures, he resented the salesperson's remark, "You did not ask for nickel-plated fixtures; you asked for brass." When there is nothing of importance at issue, it is better to be misunderstood than to cause offense. A spirit of conciliation is far more favorable to the winning of sales than a spirit of combativeness.

Meeting customers in a store is like meeting people anywhere, in the essentials of conduct involved, but no purely social relation can be more exacting in its requirements than a business position, the holder of which shares with all his fellow-workers responsibility for the good name and prosperity of his employer.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Why do some firms request their salespeople to wear black rather than dark colors, such as blue or brown?
2. Show that dressing in black is economical.
3. How should moderation in dressing be shown in connection with the present styles?
4. What is your opinion as to the advisability of extreme styles for people in business?
5. Discuss the relative expense of conservative dressing and extreme dressing.
6. What woolen materials are best suited to business wear, and why?
7. What materials are practical and suitable for business wear in hot weather?

8. Why should campaign buttons not be worn?
9. Give two reasons why jewelry should not be worn merely for ornament by salespeople when at work.
10. Why are ties, collars, and belts of bright colors prohibited?
11. Give your opinion as to the use of perfumes and perfumed soaps.
12. Why is it advisable to keep the finger nails fairly short for store work?
13. Why should nails not be manicured in public?
14. Why should salespeople give special attention to the selection of proper shoes for their work?
15. Read "The Human Mechanism," by Hough and Sedgwick, Part II, chap. xxiv, Hygiene of the Feet, and then explain what is meant by a hygienic shoe.
16. Why do skaters, mountain climbers, and little children wear shoes based on a hygienic last?
17. What type of shoe do you consider best suited to the needs of a salesperson, and why?
18. Why is patent leather an unsuitable material for shoes worn all day by a salesperson?
19. How do polish, re-soling, and straightening the heels improve the appearance and prolong the life of shoes?
20. Why are very cheap shoes usually the most expensive in the end?
21. Give three reasons for the importance of caring for the teeth.
22. Explain the proper way to brush the teeth. How often should they be brushed?
23. How often is it advisable to have the teeth examined by a dentist?
24. Look up the words "courtesy" and "dignity" in a large dictionary; note the derivation in each case and explain why the possession of these qualities is advantageous to a salesperson.
25. Under what circumstances is personal conversation among salespeople permissible? not permissible?

26. Give your opinion as to the propriety of addressing fellow-employees by their given names in the presence of customers.

27. How can a new salesperson's first day be made pleasant and easy?

28. A customer entering a department and finding several salespeople at liberty frequently selects and approaches one. What may influence this selection?

29. What, in your opinion, are the chief characteristics of an attractive personality?

30. What do you think a superintendent would wish to know about you if you applied to him for a position as salesperson?

31. What would you wish to know about the store and the position?

32. What would you do in preparation for such an interview?

33. How could you save the superintendent's time?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Visit two stores distinctly different in character and take brief notes on the impression made upon you by the salespeople.

Use this outline:

- Uniformity of dress
- Use of color (if any)
- Use of jewelry
- Tendency to extreme fashions
- Neatness of clothing and person
- Physical position and action
- Shoes, if visible
- Deportment

2. Enter brief notes in outline form in your notebook, then write in the form of a composition the answer to this question:

If you were the proprietor of a store, how should you wish your salespeople to look?

Answer as fully as possible.

3. Ask your teacher how you can improve your standing, walking, and sitting positions. If exercises are prescribed, practice them daily.

4. Observe the positions and motions of men and women everywhere. Make sketches, if you can, showing violations of any of the points included in the outlines on page 43.

5. Explain in writing the importance of the points given in these outlines and mention specifically the bearing of each on (1) appearance and (2) health.

6. Observe, if possible, uniforms worn by any of the following groups of workers :

In a store :	{	elevator operators
		porters
		younger workers (" juniors ")
In a restaurant :		waitresses
In a hospital or dispensary :		nurses

Make a written report of your observations and comment on the suitability of the costume for the work to be done in each case.



## CHAPTER IV

### **DIRECTING CUSTOMERS**

The economic principle of division of labor is exemplified by the specialized groups of employees in a department store. Cashiers handle money from sales; salespeople sell merchandise; examiners inspect sales checks and wrap goods; expressmen deliver purchases. In theory there is no overlapping of responsibility among the different units, but in actual practice one group often shares some part of the work of another group closely related to it. This may be due to a spirit of kindness, as when a cashier, observing that an examiner is behind in her work, helps to clear the desk of parcels; to the demands of an emergency which might necessitate the transfer of a stock boy to the delivery department; or to a tacitly understood division of responsibility brought about by circumstances. Such a case is the function which customers thrust upon salespeople in appealing to them for all sorts of information. It is the duty of floor managers to answer questions about the store and its resources, but since many customers fail to discriminate between an official authorized to do a certain thing and another person who may or may not serve the purpose equally well, it often devolves upon salespeople to answer inquiries.

**Influence of misdirection.** We need only look into our own experience to realize that although the directing of customers seems a small matter in itself, it may have important

consequences for the business in its influence on the public. Careless or vague responses antagonize customers, making them unreasonable and hard to satisfy; many times poor work of this kind leads to loss of patronage. Entirely justified was the annoyance of a customer who, wishing to look at card tables, visited by direction five different floors before he succeeded in finding them. A lady who desired a certain kind of athletic cap was sent from the street floor of one building to the third floor of the next, only to find that she had been within a few steps of the proper section in the first place, a discovery which so vexed her that she declared she would leave the store and buy the cap at a sporting-goods specialty house rather than retrace her steps. Another customer, who wanted blackboard cloth, was sent first to the black dress-goods section and then to the fourth floor, where only toy blackboards were sold. Although the store carried the desired material, she became discouraged and left without it. She was tired out with searching, and the failure of several persons to direct her properly had made her lose confidence in all. Business is thus diverted from a store to its competitors.

**Learning the location of merchandise.** Since the directing of customers becomes inevitably a part of the work of a salesperson, careful preparation should be made for it. The query most frequently made concerns the location of merchandise, and therefore a detailed knowledge of the store's departments is necessary. A plan for acquiring this knowledge may be outlined as follows:

- First, learn your own department thoroughly.
- Second, learn the lines of merchandise carried on each floor of the store.

Third, learn the details of the departments nearest your section and of those whose merchandise is closely related to yours.

Fourth, gradually master the most important details of all departments.

Learning the departments according to this or some other scheme is by no means an impossible task, and if the labor is undertaken systematically, the fund of knowledge grows surprisingly fast. The question of time for making such a survey and study naturally arises. Each one must needs plan this out for himself, adopting the best method under existing conditions, and if the floor manager understands what is being attempted, he will be glad to help accomplish the end. Salespeople are ordinarily allowed shopping time at the beginning and end of the day, and since they do not make purchases every day, this time may frequently be utilized for a study of the store. By keeping their eyes open and cultivating their powers of observation, they may learn much as they pass through and go about the store. In order to gain familiarity with different parts of the establishment, it is wise to vary the daily trip to and from lunch rooms and locker rooms.

Those who apply themselves intelligently to the task of learning all about a store will utilize the directory which, for the convenience of the public, is frequently placed near the elevators. This alphabetical list of the merchandise carried by the store, and its location, may be easily studied while one is waiting for the car. Even more accessible are the classified lists of leading departments, arranged according to floors, sometimes printed on the back of the sales checks, sometimes in the form of a pamphlet small enough to be inserted in the sales book. These lists may be conveniently memorized at odd moments during the day. If advantage

is taken of these and other simple opportunities for acquiring the needed information, mastery of the whole store will be gained with comparatively little effort.

It is advisable to form early the habit of keeping certain records in a notebook of a size easily carried in the pocket. For instance, a list of the most important articles carried in a given department may be jotted down and reviewed until the names of the articles are perfectly familiar. As opportunity is presented, similar lists may be compiled for other departments and learned after the same manner. On dull days and in leisure moments salespeople may drill each other on the location of merchandise, thus training themselves in asking as well as answering questions.

**Accuracy and courtesy in giving directions.** *Accuracy*, then, may be considered the first essential in directing customers, and the second is *courtesy*. A gracious manner, the outward expression of a willing spirit, creates an atmosphere of friendliness which is favorable to the transaction of business. Moreover, by answering a question in the best form and manner a salesman may win a new friend and a permanent customer for himself, perhaps not on the occasion of the inquiry, but later, when circumstances bring the inquirer back to that same section. He has also the satisfaction of knowing that he has done his part in developing the day's business.

In giving directions it is important to look directly at the customer, into the eyes, if possible, and to speak distinctly and slowly. The voice and the face should express interest, willingness, and pleasure in the service. A blank countenance, averted glance, and meager, mumbled answer indicate a lack of breeding and intelligence.

**Clearness essential.** Terms not clearly intelligible to persons unfamiliar with the store should be explained. Such expressions as "the annex," "the other building," "the gray room," "the balcony," "the mezzanine floor," "the new wing," may be commonly current among employees and habitual customers but only add to the confusion and perplexity of casual customers and strangers. Again, instead of being enlightened, customers are often obliged to ask again and again when told to take the "next aisle over" or to go "three sections down" or "way down in the back." Once inside the store many persons fail to distinguish the back from the front; they do not know where to begin counting the aisles and sections and are ignorant of the area covered by a given section or department. Even floor managers sometimes fail to respond intelligently or even courteously when appealed to for guidance. One such official replied to a customer who had asked for a certain department, "Keep on going," a remark as curt as it was unenlightening.

Thus *clearness* is the third essential in the giving of directions, and it should be cultivated at all times. It is well to assume that the person who makes an inquiry is a stranger in the store, for it is better to give too much information than not enough.

While most of the questions asked by customers concern the store, its merchandise, or its service, there are always some questions, usually from tourists, about the city. For the benefit of patrons of the store, as well as for their own good, salespeople should inform themselves as to the best way to reach the city's most important public buildings, places of amusement, stations, resorts, parks, and other places of special interest.

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS**

1. Give examples from your own experience as a customer, illustrating the inconvenience and unpleasantness resulting from inaccurate directions.

2. What lines of merchandise are usually found on the street floor of a department store? What is the basis of selection?

3. Why are suits, coats, and gowns ordinarily placed above the street floor?

4. What other departments are usually found above the street floor? Why?

5. What departments are most conspicuous from the main entrance of two different stores with which you are familiar?

6. Locate in these same two stores the following departments :

Trunks	Shoes	Hardware
Athletic goods	Books	Men's furnishings
Cameras	Baskets	Drugs
Art embroidery	Umbrellas	Sweaters
Music	Leather goods	Baby carriages
Lamps	Pictures	Pocket cutlery

7. What, besides shoes, will be found in a shoe department? What, besides writing paper, in a stationery department? What, besides pictures, in a picture store?

8. If a salesperson is uncertain about the location of any article or line of merchandise, what should he do when asked about it? Why is it inadvisable to guess?

9. Give your opinion as to the use of gestures in directing customers to different parts of the store.

10. What is a mezzanine floor? From what language is this word taken?

11. Why are the auditing and executive offices usually near the top of the store building?

12. Why is the shipping department usually in the basement?

13. In what part of the building is the restaurant usually located, and why?

14. Imagining yourself a salesperson in the men's glove department of a certain store (name the one that you select), direct a customer as clearly and concisely as possible to the following departments:

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>a.</i> Post office (in the store)  | <i>f.</i> Parcel-checking desk    |
| <i>b.</i> Nearest public telephone    | <i>g.</i> Information bureau      |
| <i>c.</i> Waiting room                | <i>h.</i> Superintendent's office |
| <i>d.</i> Drinking fountain           | <i>i.</i> Lost and found office   |
| <i>e.</i> Office for payment of bills | <i>j.</i> Adjustment office       |

15. How are fire exits indicated? Why are they so carefully marked?

16. Name the public buildings in this city for which tourists are most likely to ask.

17. Make a list of the most popular resorts, and tell how they may most easily be reached.

18. Make a list of any places of historical, educational, or artistic importance in or near this city, stating briefly their location and why they are of interest.

19. Why do customers so often ask questions of salespeople rather than of floor managers?

20. What should be your attitude toward a customer who seeks only information?

21. State fully what you would do if you overheard an employee giving an inaccurate direction.

### ASSIGNMENTS

Record in your notebook a study of the general plan of any large store with which you are familiar.

1. Sketch the plan of the street floor showing all exits and entrances, elevators, and stairways. Indicate and name the streets which bound the store and show, by means of arrows, the position of the store in

relation to the points of the compass. Indicate the exact location of all the departments on the street floor. If you do not understand how to get the right proportions, ask your teacher to help you. Use india ink, if possible, for your finished plan.

2. State in outline form what merchandise is carried or what work done on all the other floors of the store, *or*

3. Make a diagrammatic cross section of the main part of the store, indicating in some way the activities of the different levels.

4. Misdirection often occurs because not enough care is taken to find out the customer's exact need. For example, if lamps are asked for it is necessary to know what kind of lamp is desired—whether a kerosene, gas, electric, or alcohol lamp. Make similar subheadings for the following articles:

Screens

Curtains

Bags

Paper

Cards

Hooks

Paints

Frames

Brushes

Pins

Scarfs

Trimnings



## CHAPTER V

### THE MERCHANDISE

#### ITS CARE, ARRANGEMENT, AND DISPLAY

The stock or merchandise of a store represents the investment of the firm's money or its capital. If the merchandise is sold or "turned" within a reasonable length of time at the price originally set by the buyer of the goods, the investment ordinarily yields a satisfactory rate of interest or a good profit is made. Many departments turn stock, or make a *turnover*, four times a year, while the stock of some departments is converted into money much oftener. Every merchant wishes to turn his stock as often as possible, because this is a profitable way of doing business. An example may make this point clearer.

**A merchandise "turnover."** Suppose a dealer hires two men, A and B, to sell picture post cards in two different parts of the city. Each man, with a stall and \$50 worth of stock, starts business Monday morning. A, in a favorable location, and of more than average ability, sells out his stock in two days, and on Wednesday begins again with a fresh line valued, as before, at \$50. He is again sold out on Thursday night, and his stall on Friday is stocked with a third \$50 lot of cards, which is sold out Saturday. The cards were sold at a 25 per cent gross profit to the dealer; the weekly rental for the stall was \$5; the salesman A was

paid \$1 a day. At the end of the week the statement of A's business ran thus :

Receipts from sales \$150 plus 25 per cent . . .	\$187.50	
Expenses		
Investment in stock . . . . .	\$150.00	
Wages . . . . .	6.00	
Rent . . . . .	5.00	161.00
Net profit . . . . .		<u>\$26.50</u>

B, on the other hand, with the same amount of stock at the outset, sold out only twice in a week's time. Rental, wages, and gross profit were the same as in A's case, but conditions were less favorable to business. On Saturday night B's account stood thus :

Receipts from sales \$100 plus 25 per cent . . .	\$125.00	
Expenses		
Investment in stock . . . . .	\$100.00	
Wages . . . . .	6.00	
Rent . . . . .	5.00	111.00
Net profit . . . . .		<u>\$14.00</u>

In this situation it is assumed that no stock was lost, soiled, stolen, or in any other way rendered unsalable, and that there were no extra expenses, such as repairs to the stall, the installation of a cash register, or the procuring of a license. The problem has been set forth in its simplest terms to show that the turnover of stock effected three times in one week yields a larger profit than if made only twice. A returned the dealer a profit of \$26.50 as against \$14 turned in by B. It is apparent that if the dealer increased A's wages to \$10 or even \$12 a week, A would still be making more money for him than B.

While the stock of any one department in a large store is seldom entirely closed out, the buyer usually becomes alarmed unless it "moves" quickly, and frequently, under such circumstances, deems it wise to reduce the price. Without the inducement of a low price, merchandise may remain so long on the shelves as to be difficult of sale, for customers expect and demand fresh, new merchandise, and as long as stock is unsold, it is "dead" stock, bringing in no profit, occupying storage space, and usually depreciating in value.

There are many possible explanations of slow-moving stock. Three important causes may be poor buying, poor selling, poor stock-keeping. This chapter will treat of the salesperson's responsibility for the care of his stock and its resulting salability.

**The care of stock ; good housekeeping.** Since the details of stock-keeping vary greatly with the merchandise, the present consideration of the subject must be somewhat general. In the first place, if stock is to be kept clean, the immediate environment must be clean, which means that shelves, racks, drawers, cases, boxes, and fixtures should be given frequent and careful attention. If repairs are needed or any work is demanded which is not within the province of a salesperson, it should be reported to the proper authority at once. But simply speaking of a needed bit of work does not always suffice; the person reporting it should feel responsible for it until he sees it done. At regular intervals—once every week or two—a house-cleaning should take place. Everything should be removed from the shelves so that the corners can be cleaned. All waste paper, empty boxes, old covers, and other trash should be cleared out. Boxes should be dusted, top, bottom, and sides; cloth-covered boxes may be advantageously wiped

with a damp cloth. Drawers should be removed, emptied of their contents, and carefully cleaned. Merchandise sometimes becomes lodged behind and under drawers and is practically lost because the drawers are almost never taken out. An extreme but true instance of the loss which may result from carelessness in some of these respects is the following:

A saleswoman was assigned to a trimming department which carried a great variety of stock, some of it high-priced. The stock was kept in boxes which were placed on shelves running to within a short distance from the floor. As the space between the shelves was narrow and the boxes were crowded closely together, the task of cleaning the department was a troublesome one and none of the salespeople cared to undertake it. The new saleswoman, however, observing the untidy and neglected appearance of the section, resolved upon a house-cleaning. Removing all the boxes from the shelves, she collected from obscure corners and from the floor under the lowest shelf (where a yardstick was an effective ally) *five bushel baskets* full of stock which had become so soiled and rumpled that it had to be burned. She found also five yards of real ermine trimming which had been walked over and kicked under the counter. This trimming had been valued at \$7 a yard. In another place she discovered several boxes of swan's-down trimming in which mice had nested and raised families.

In all stock work it is important to have the right kind of tools, and salespeople should endeavor to supply themselves with whatever may be needed for the satisfactory performance of their duties.

**Time for stock work.** The best time for stock work is the first hour or two in the morning, when there is usually little business, but much may be accomplished at odd moments

during the day; in fact, a systematic stock-keeper is able to do a great deal of this necessary work right along with his selling. A salesman in the stationery department, for example, keeps his stock constantly replenished from the reserve supply so that he is never "out" at a particularly busy time, when delay would be annoying; he is careful to replace covers on boxes before any confusion and mixing can occur; and he keeps the counters and cases orderly and attractive by a few touches after each sale. In this way the section never looks cluttered, and the stock is protected from much injurious handling.

**Repairs.** In garment departments salespeople are often called upon to do some sewing. The stock, in this case, should be inspected every day for needed repairs. If missing hooks and eyes, loose fastenings, rips, and hanging buttons are given prompt attention, the work is not burdensome for anyone; but if these details are neglected, much trouble may be caused the workroom at an inconvenient time, or a sale may be lost because the merchandise is not in perfect condition when shown to a customer. Give two possible reasons why the customer returned the gown of the following incident:

A \$29.50 white net dress had been sold and was to be sent by special delivery from Boston to a town in New Hampshire. The examiner at the desk, discovering that one part of a snap fastener was missing from the girdle, reported it, and the dress was sent to the workroom, where it remained for fifteen or twenty minutes. As the skirt was being carefully folded in the box, the fact that it had become soiled around the bottom from dragging over the floor was evident. The dress was again sent away for about twenty minutes. When it returned, slightly improved in appearance, it had a strong odor of gasoline. It was hung in the open window

a few minutes, but the day was damp and cloudy — conditions unfavorable for the removal of odors. The box was sent to the shipping room just before the closing hour of the store.

**Protection of merchandise.** The care of very delicate merchandise is always a difficult problem. Even though space is adequate and salespeople are careful, it is hard to keep such stock immaculate. Many precautions may, however, be taken, such as a cheesecloth binding around the bottom of an evening coat or gown and similar protection for white collars and cuffs. Tissue paper may often be used to advantage. Anyone working in a department which carries high-priced, perishable merchandise should devise protective measures for safeguarding it. It is frequently advisable to place a cloth or a piece of paper under such goods when showing it to a customer, as in the case of light-colored coats and bonnets for children or beautiful silks and satins.

**Wrapped merchandise.** Manufacturers, realizing that clean merchandise sells twice as quickly as does that of rather doubtful appearance, send out many articles nowadays in "shield" (or "sanitary") packages, each article being wrapped separately in tissue or oiled paper and sealed. So long as the wrapping is unbroken, customers may be sure that the contents are absolutely fresh — a good selling point, especially when toilet goods are concerned or articles intended for little children, such as toys of rubber or celluloid.

**Lost parts.** A serious result of careless stock-keeping in certain departments is the loss of important parts, for example, the key to a jewel box, one or two paints from a paint box, a tool from a tool chest, a dish from a tea set.

Those who sell things which come in sets, sections, or parts should be as careful to keep track of the individual parts as of the complete article. Customers are not likely to be willing to buy incomplete sets, and many times they will not or cannot wait until missing parts can be replaced. Moreover, it is sometimes impossible to procure duplicate parts. Carelessness in regard to this aspect of stock-keeping is not only wasteful but usually involves disappointment to customers as well and indicates a lack of competency which is poor advertising for a store. It is poor service, also, as is illustrated by the case of a customer who was about to buy an expensive set of imported building blocks when it was discovered that the book of illustrations showing how to use the blocks had been lost. It was the only set of its kind in the store. Another customer was greatly disappointed because he could not get the game "ringtoss" for a Christmas present. There was one set in stock, but this one, it appeared, had no stick—an essential part of the game.

**Handling merchandise.** The careful *handling* of merchandise by salespeople is of importance for two reasons :

1. When treated with care, it is less likely to become shopworn and of lessened value.
2. The salesperson's feeling of respect and regard for the merchandise, as indicated by careful handling, impresses the customer favorably, inspiring added confidence in it. The fact that a salesperson touches an article as if it were excellent, valuable, or to be admired makes a customer feel that it is so and increases its desirability in his eyes.

The negative side of this principle is well illustrated by the average bargain table. The usual policy dictates that the low-priced merchandise piled upon the table shall be allowed

to appear disorderly and unattractive, and as the tables are frequently overloaded with stock, the busy hands of eager bargain hunters soon make of the pile a disorganized, almost unrecognizable mass through which customers and salespeople alike pull, twist, and strain the merchandise in their search for the "best values." Rare, indeed, is the customer who treats such stock with respect, for it does not command respect.

**Stock-keeping and salesmanship.** A writer in the *Publishers' Weekly* relates an incident which is quoted in full because it brings out clearly how appearance of the stock and the way it is handled may be deciding factors in a sale.

A man was overheard discussing his quest for an umbrella. He said he had gone into a shop that had always been regarded as a foremost retail establishment for this line of merchandise, and after selecting a silk umbrella of high price, he turned his attention to an examination of the handles. But every handle in the establishment was cheap — so cheap in appearance that he had gone out without making a purchase at all, giving the excuse that he would first find out whether the man for whom he intended the umbrella really needed one. As a matter of fact, however, this man wanted the umbrella himself.

He then went to another establishment — a very small shop farther down the street — and had found just what he wanted. The handles were so much more attractive, he said, that he could not understand why the large establishment, with only cheap handles, had a so much greater reputation than the small one, which appeared to have only fine handles, whether for high-price, medium-price, or low-price umbrellas.

But the explanation which the umbrella purchaser sought might have been supplied by the man who overheard him. The facts in the case were that the large shop carried stock





**"KEEP THY SHOP AND THY SHOP WILL KEEP THEE"**

**This book department is a model of orderly, convenient, and attractive arrangement**



far superior to that of the small one, but its manner of serving its goods was at fault.

In the large establishment the handles were thrown any way at all into large rough drawers. To pull open one of these drawers was to expose a mass of merchandise that appeared cheap, primarily because it was kept in an order that seemed to certify to its cheapness. In the small shop the handles were all nicely placed on slabs covered with cloth, each handle fitted snugly into a little strap pocket, and the wooden part of the handles was wrapped about with tissue paper. If this entire stock had cost only a few dollars, still any ordinary man seeing the manner in which it was displayed and cared for would instinctively believe that the handles were costly merchandise.

**Customers' carelessness.** In spite of great care and consideration on the part of salespeople, stock may become soiled and injured through carelessness of *customers* who handle it roughly or, touching it with soiled gloves, leave a mark or stain not easily removed. Such unfortunate mishaps are likely to occur when white merchandise is being shown — white shoes, for instance, or suits or fine leather goods. A tactful salesperson foreseeing the danger may be able to avert it by requesting a customer to remove her gloves, or to exercise care in the handling of this or that article, but judgment as well as tact is needed in such a case, and many times nothing can be done. It may be possible, however, to restore a slightly damaged piece of merchandise by very simple means. Dampening and pressing are often beneficial. A soft eraser may sometimes be used with good effect on a hard surface. French chalk, gasoline, and ether may be helpful. The use of these and other cleansing agents should be understood.

**Systematic arrangement of stock.** Another important division of stock-keeping is the arrangement of the merchandise in a given department according to some definite scheme of classification. Until a salesperson has learned the plan in operation for his special stock, he will be of little use, for he will be unable to find whatever may be desired. The following incident is a further quotation from the article mentioned on page 68 :

One of the largest department stores of a big city was visited some weeks ago by a woman who wished to purchase some belting. The belting was kept in a department of its own, in a little square of counters, but the girl in charge seemed to be ignorant of the whereabouts of her stock, which was packed in a lot of miscellaneous boxes not properly or sufficiently marked. The woman waited five minutes, while the girl plowed indifferently through six or eight pasteboard boxes, and then excused herself with a "Never mind" and went several doors above to a small-sized retail store handling exclusively dress accessories.

Immediately upon inquiring for belting, the customer was shown a glass case in which the belts were kept in as attractive order as the most delicately colored ribbon, and here she bought what she wanted, although she knew the price paid for it was from 10 to 20 per cent higher than that for which she could have obtained the same article at the department store. When a customer goes into an establishment and asks for an article of merchandise, and the salesman begins to rummage about a lot of truck off somewhere in a corner, the patron very naturally is brought to believe that if he does get what he is after it will be some discarded merchandise with which the merchant has been "stuck."

Whatever other advantages it may possess, the arrangement of stock should be *convenient* — neither too high nor

too low, too outspread nor too condensed, too detailed nor too general. Garments for adults are usually arranged according to *size*, after which they may be further sorted and arranged according to *color*. *Material* may form a third basis of division. Many articles included under the heading of children's wear are graded according to *age*. Handkerchiefs and neckwear are classified on the basis of *price* and *style*, while the source of supply, whether *foreign* or *domestic*, is one of the leading divisions in the disposition of underwear. Laces are arranged according to *kind* and *workmanship* — hand-made or machine-made, or *real* and *imitation*. Books are classified according to their authors, publishers, or subjects. Whatever the basis of classification, salespeople should be thoroughly familiar with it and able to explain its distinctions to customers; they should be able to turn unerringly to the right spot when any article is called for; and, perhaps most important of all, they should be so well acquainted with the movement of the various lines of stock as almost automatically to report to the buyer in plenty of time for re-orders. Responsibility for full lines is often intrusted to a head salesperson, known as head of stock, but the work is better done and more likely to be free from serious omissions and errors if the subordinate workers do their full part. By such coöperation salespeople learn many things, increase their value to the buyer, and place themselves in line for promotion.

**Results of poor stock-keeping.** Careless treatment and neglect of stock give rise to many a mark-down sale, with the attendant disadvantage of reduced profit if not actual loss; the frequent repetition of such sales lowers the standing of a store in a community, and employees whose poor work

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has produced such adverse results cannot expect to rise in position — if, indeed, their services are retained.

**Display of merchandise.** The display of merchandise in street windows and in conspicuous places within the store is the work of specialists associated with the advertising department, but the separate department displays are very generally the work of salespeople. It is a pleasant and interesting task to arrange attractive new merchandise in a case, on a counter, a table, or a reel ; yet this attempt to gain the favorable attention of the public is often largely unavailing because of a lack of intelligence, care, or taste on the part of those who are responsible for the display. Only a few general principles can be stated here :

1. The environment should be clean.
2. A suitable and effective background should be chosen.

A trade journal commenting upon the need of judgment and taste in this matter referred to a window background cleverly painted to represent a country scene. A picturesque little bungalow was shown, with a stone wall in the foreground and blue hills in the distance. All the window space was given over to a display of corsets. The purpose of the display was utterly defeated by this absurd combination, which could evoke nothing but mirth and ridicule. In another window — whose background portrayed rolling, green golf links — washing machines, clotheshorses, granite kitchenware, and coat hangers were displayed. "To the frivolous mind the scene suggested moving day" the writer humorously remarked.

Plain backgrounds are, however, much more commonly used than painted scenes.

3. Supports and foundations not intended to be visible should be covered with concealing material.

Pink crêpe paper neatly fitted over a large wooden box in a display window was not thick enough to hide a representation of a glass preserve jar on the end of the box and the boldly lettered name of a well-known manufacturer of preserve jars.

4. Garments placed on forms should be free from wrinkles and placed evenly. If the material of the waist or gown displayed is sheer or of delicate color, the form should be covered with white cloth or tissue paper. The form should also be fully dressed. A figure in a petticoat only was once seen in a window.

5. Articles to be displayed should be scrutinized for imperfections and for a lack of cleanliness or freshness.

A minor defect such as a missing button, tiny spot or break, streak of dust, faded portion, visible basting threads, or uneven joining may catch and hold a customer's attention and exert an unfavorable influence.

6. Articles should be suitably and reasonably placed.

An inverted parasol with a sweater thrown over the side and a large hat placed on the handle had an unpleasant and disturbing effect upon the observer. Heavy rugs draped back from the sides of a window like drapery curtains are unattractive because incongruous.

7. It is often desirable to show with a certain line of stock, merchandise closely related to it. For example, linen and silverware go well together, as do stationery and desk sets, wall papers and draperies. When merchandise is thus displayed in combination, great care should be taken to have the combinations appropriate.

This principle of suitability was violated in a window in which boxes of writing-paper were shown with meat choppers. The floor of another window was completely covered with salted peanuts still retaining their dull-red papery skins. At regular intervals the surface of this peanut carpet was

broken by tall glass vases containing artificial American Beauty roses. A window so arranged is not likely to attract customers to the inside of the store.

8. Harmonious color combinations are of great importance.

The effect of a display was greatly marred by three sweaters of different colors — salmon, cerise, and turquoise blue — placed side by side in a window. The unfortunate assembling of vivid colors in close proximity made the garments and everything near them objectionable.

9. Price marks are usually not removed from articles, but are made as inconspicuous as possible by being tucked out of sight or covered in some way.

10. A "center of interest" should be established. Usually an article to which such prominence is given is larger than other articles in the display, or of different shape, or of noticeable color. The character of the center of interest influences all other elements of the display, and they should be subordinated to it.

11. To be interesting, a display must present *variety* in form, color, or line, or possibly in all three of these respects.

For example, it is difficult to arrange a window of just plates, handkerchiefs, towels, or books without producing a monotonous effect. Variety must be introduced in some way.

12. Certain principles of design should be studied and applied. The following are important:<sup>1</sup>

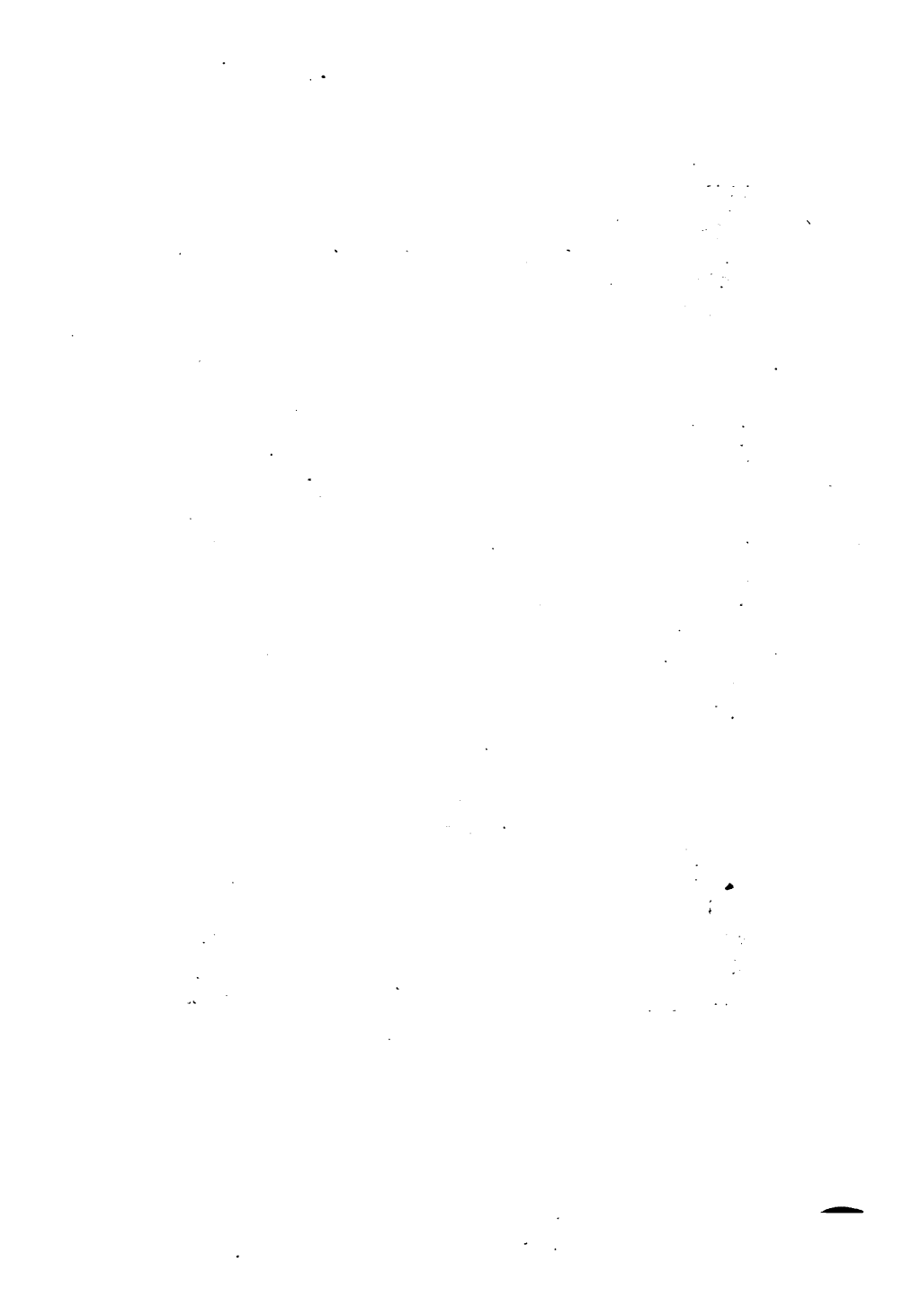
*Spacing*: the harmonious distribution of forms in a given space.

There should be no effect of crowding, neither should there be large, bare areas.

*Proportion*: the harmonious relation of the different parts of a composition.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions from "The Principles of Design," by George Woolliscroft Rhead. B. T. Batsford, London.







**A WELL-ARRANGED CASE**



**A POORLY ARRANGED CASE**

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This is especially important in connection with the relative sizes of articles displayed. Ordinarily an extremely large object and a very small object do not look well together, and the observer is more conscious of the incongruity of such combinations than of the attractiveness of the articles.

*Balance*: the *impression* of similar harmony in the arrangement of dissimilar forms.

Anyone can easily demonstrate this principle by arranging books, or buttons, or even pieces of paper, of different sizes. Test the balance by imagining a line drawn vertically through the design, as the carefully planned arrangement may be called. It is not necessary that the two sides be precisely alike, in order to be balanced, but there should be an effect of *equalization of weight*.

*Unity*: coherence and completeness of form and idea and coöperation of all the parts of a piece of ornament or decorative design.

To be unified, a display must be orderly, well-spaced and proportioned, and judgment must be shown in the selection and treatment of the material to be displayed. The student will gain a standard by which to judge the unity of displays by analyzing windows considered good by qualified persons.

*Contrast*: both in form and color the effect produced by the juxtaposition of two opposing elements, as the straight line to the circle, light to shade, plain spaces to those ornamented.

This is often brought out in displays by the use of color, a striking example being the recent vogue for black and white.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Explain by means of an example the difference between gross profit and net profit.
2. Would a turnover of merchandise be likely to occur more often in dress goods or suits? groceries or hardware? shoes or hats? Give a reason for your answer in each case.

3. Why is it important that every piece of merchandise should have its own clearly marked price tag? Answer from three stand-points: that of (1) the customer, (2) the salesperson, (3) the system.

4. Why is it bad stock-keeping to allow waste paper and boxes to collect in drawers and on shelves? In what way may such neglect prove dangerous?

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a feather duster?

6. Why is it important that boxes and their proper covers be kept together?

7. When you open a box to display its contents what disposition do you make of the cover, and why?

8. In caring for what lines of stock is a whisk broom useful? thread and needles? a hammer? a small pair of bellows? a polishing cloth? a pair of scissors?

9. How may the glass of a show case be most easily and quickly cleaned and polished?

10. Explain the relation of clean hands to good stock-keeping. Why is it difficult to keep one's hands clean in a store, and what can be done about it?

11. What special points should be emphasized in the care of jewelry? glass? talking-machine records?

12. Comment on the policy ordinarily pursued in regard to bargain tables. Why is so much stock placed on the tables at once? Why is it allowed to become disorderly and to remain so?

13. Outline what seems to you a good plan for effecting the quick sale of bargain merchandise without undue disorder and confusion.

14. Explain the way in which a coat should be shown by a salesperson in order that it may be handled as little and as delicately as possible. Do the same for a hat; an unframed picture; a book; a gold watch; a traveling bag; satin slippers.

15. Tell in detail just what you would do if asked to prepare a lot of boys' wash suits for window display.

16. Discuss both sides of this question: Should stock shown to one customer be replaced before another customer is served?

17. Infants' white silk bonnets with ribbon ties are to be so arranged in a drawer as not to be crushed or creased. They must be kept free from dust. How would you protect them?

18. What merchandise on display in a store have you seen protected by a sign "Please do not handle"? What would have been the probable result of handling?

19. What is "shopworn" stock, and how is such a condition brought about?

20. After stock has been shown and the selection has been made, why is it advisable to replace the unsold merchandise as soon as possible? Give three reasons.

21. In what way may the mismatching of suits, for example, a coat of a 36 suit with a skirt of a 38, be disastrous?

22. In some stores suits are arranged in sections according to *price*. Discuss the pros and cons of this arrangement.

23. Show the relation of neglect of stock to lessened profits.

24. For what other reasons, besides the sale of shopworn or damaged stock, are mark-down or special sales held?

25. In what different ways may ribbons be classified?

26. What is the simplest way to classify a stock of initialed stationery?

27. How would you classify a stock of postal cards from foreign countries? a stock of Christmas cards?

28. Name three lines of merchandise in which color is an important factor in arrangement.

29. How is separate, sanitary wrapping of articles likely to affect their price? Compare the prices of ten articles of food sold in packages with that of the same commodities sold in bulk.

30. How does careful stock-keeping help a salesperson to have a good book?

31. How is good stock-keeping advantageous to (1) the salesperson? (2) the customer? (3) the store?

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32. Study window displays during the next week and note any defects which you observe in displays of garments. Look for dust, wrinkles, missing or improperly fastened hooks or buttons.

33. State what defects in merchandise might be revealed by a careful inspection of a stock of

Mechanical toys  
China

Fishing tackle  
Sweaters

34. Tell how variety may be obtained in a display of

Canned goods  
Ribbons  
Handkerchiefs

Books  
Flags  
Sheet music

35. Why are prices usually not visible on goods which are on display? Answer from (1) the artistic standpoint and (2) the business standpoint.

36. What is a T stand? Describe its various uses.

37. Name merchandise which might appropriately be displayed in combination with

Golf balls  
Framed pictures  
Silk sweaters  
Hospital supplies  
Steamer rugs

Skates  
Garden tools  
Sofa pillows  
Clocks  
Rifles

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Visit in any large store four of the departments listed below (specialty houses may be visited, if preferred). Note every evidence of careful treatment of stock. Note also any neglect or carelessness which might have an injurious effect upon the merchandise. Write detailed observations in the form of a composition.

Furniture  
Evening gowns  
Confectionery  
Electrical appliances

Silverware  
Musical instruments  
Rugs and carpets  
Office supplies



2. Sketch, if possible, or describe in words a display of merchandise in *one* of the sections visited. Criticize it fully, giving good and poor points.

3. Study and write a report on the windows of a bakery or a provision store, noting changes you would make in each case if you were the proprietor.

4. Study the windows of the store or shop whose displays you consider the most effective or most beautiful in this city. Write a careful description of one or more of the windows, with comment on the following points :

- a.* Center of interest
- b.* Background
- c.* Color scheme
- d.* Spacing of articles
- e.* Suitability of combinations
- f.* Proportion
- g.* Impression of unity
- h.* Balance
- i.* Attracting power
- j.* Cleanliness of window, floor, background, and merchandise

5. Make a written comparison of the displays pictured on pages 78 and 79, using points *a*, *d*, *f*, *g*, and *h* as a basis.

6. Explain in writing the old saying "A nimble sixpence is better than a slow shilling." Try to work it out on a practical business basis with the investment of a \$5 capital.

## CHAPTER VI

### APPROACHING CUSTOMERS AND STARTING SALES

**Expression of store policy.** Owners and managers of large city stores, unlike the proprietors of country stores, seldom meet their patrons personally, and therefore have little opportunity for establishing that friendly relationship with customers which counts immeasurably in developing a spirit of goodwill toward the business. To make up for the lack of this personal touch, recourse is had to various methods of informing the public as to the ideals, policies, and practice of a firm. The principles in accordance with which a store is conducted are sometimes set forth in print, as in a booklet issued by a Western store in which this comprehensive purpose is announced :

To do the right thing at the right time in the right way ;  
to do some things better than they were ever done before ;  
to eliminate errors ; to know both sides of a question ; to be courteous ; to be an example ; to work for the love of the work ; to anticipate requirements ; to develop resources ; to recognize no impediments ; to master circumstances ; to act from reason rather than rule ; to be satisfied with nothing short of perfection.

A Boston store has inscribed in letters of gold on the wall : " The ornament of a house is the friends that frequent it " ; and on the back of the sales check used by this store, these " fundamentals " of management are announced :

To have, always, the merchandise the public wants at the time the public wants it.

To sell only merchandise that is dependable as to quality of material, fastness of color, of the highest standard as to style, fit, and workmanship, and correctly marked as to size.

To print no exaggeration, misleading statements, or half-truths under any circumstances.

Another form of message to the public may set forth a specific fact of a practical nature. The amusingly ambiguous sign in a certain shoe store: "Every man, woman, and child can have a fit in this store," and the unnecessarily brusque notice in a crowded downtown restaurant: "Patrons will confer a favor on the management by not loitering," would be more effective if more carefully worded.

Signs, slogans, mottoes, and printed slips mailed with bills and tucked into bundles are undoubtedly of value in impressing those who notice them and take the trouble to read them, but many pass such things by without a glance. In the last analysis, that which expresses the spirit of the management in unmistakable terms is the *store*, its appearance, its physical conditions, its merchandise, its service, and above all the character of its salespeople, for it is they who represent the firm in the daily transactions over the counter.

**First impressions.** Upon entering a store a person may not be fully conscious of any of the elements which go to make up his impression of it, yet he is affected by them, and his reaction to these influences may have a powerful effect for good or ill on any business which he intends to transact. For example, a man sensitive to impure air would wish to leave a poorly ventilated store as soon as possible, and only exceptional service or merchandise would

induce him to attempt to do business there. He would talk about the store's objectionable system of ventilation and would keep others from visiting a store which he considered unhygienic.

A brusque answer from an uncivil floor manager ; a mortifying stumble over misplaced stock ; gum-chewing employees ; a jolting, jarring, noisy trip in an elevator ; half-hearted, unintelligent service from salespeople — these and many other factors less easy to state concretely may have everything to do with a person's feeling toward a store. A psychologist comments on this point as follows :

If you get a good entering impression you are in a buoyant frame of mind, your mind is on the pleasant aspects of things, and you are ready to notice the pleasant points as you go along, entirely ignoring the unpleasant. Whereas, if you get a bad start you will feel irritable, and nothing will suit you. You will see every defect, and you will distort and not like even the agreeable things. The whole tone of the store is apt to be determined for you by your first impression.

Since, then, first impressions are so important in creating in customers a mental attitude which is favorable or unfavorable to the transaction of business, the salesperson's initial contact, or the approach, must be considered.

Persons whom we meet for the first time — in church, at social affairs, in school, or in business, anywhere, in fact — affect us in one of three ways : (1) they attract ; (2) they repel ; (3) or they make a neutral impression on us, this last resulting in indifference on our part. This analysis holds true for the relation of customers to salespeople, and it is clearly desirable that the meeting of these two essential factors in every sale shall result in the *attraction* of customers.

What are the qualities which attract and win friends? It has been well said that "the way to have a friend is to be one," or, applied to salesmanship, the way to make customers friendly is to show a spirit of friendliness toward them. As a salesman approaches a customer he gives evidence of this spirit by certain outward signs: a quick forward step; a slight nod or bow; a smile, or at least a friendly, encouraging expression; often a word of greeting. A personal connection is thus made and the way opened for formal business.

**Approaching customers.** Opinions differ as to the best manner of approaching customers, and the approach must, of course, vary according to conditions. For example, a spacious suit department affords greater opportunity for a gracious approach, perhaps necessitates the exercise of more judgment, the possession of more poise, than a small, compact small-ware section. But whatever the situation, the greeting of the salesman should unmistakably express *welcome* and a willingness to serve, and his attitude should be such that the customer, whatever his circumstances, will feel at ease.

Some customers like to be met with a courteous "Good morning," while others object to this greeting on the ground that a store is not the place for even this slight social interchange. Another moot question concerns the use of "madam" in addressing a customer. Those who argue against it contend that "madam" is a title and, as such, is incongruous in a democracy; that it has a pretentious sound; that it is superfluous. Those who favor it think it adds dignity and finish to the words it adjoins, and they further maintain that good form demands the use of this expression when a customer's name is not known.

**Remembering customers' names.** Addressing a customer by name, when this is known, seems to be almost universally acceptable. It is pleasant to be remembered, to feel that we have impressed ourselves as interesting, reasonable, sympathetic, or in some way worthy of recollection. Something complimentary seems to be implied, and the friendly relation between customer and salesman is strengthened by this personal recognition. Salespeople who appreciate the value of being able to identify customers make a practice of memorizing names and train themselves to associate names and faces. A successful saleswoman of coats describes her method as follows :

I have a small memorandum book with each page dated. I put down my customer's name, address, telephone number, and size the day I make her acquaintance. I make it my business to remember not only her name but also her address. My customers feel that I am genuinely interested in them when I remember their names, and they always seem pleased when I say, "Same address, Mrs. L.?" They sometimes give me credit for a better memory than I have, but it takes only a minute to glance into my notebook while I am writing out my sale, and my customer feels that I have kept her in mind. I always study a customer and often make a note of the color and style of garment suited to her. Then when we have a special sale of coats, I sometimes call her up or write her about a good value in which I think she would be interested. In this way I gain not only her trade but that of her friends.

The store often uses my list when it wishes to notify customers privately of special sales. I will tell you how I get some of my customers' names and addresses in the first place.

My list is chiefly made up of the names of customers who, when they first entered the department, were "only looking."

I find that a little attention to these customers means a great deal in the end. A customer who is apparently only passing by is dropped by the average salesman, but I look for just these customers as my opportunity to win friends. I try to make them feel that it is their right to look around and that I am there to help them whether they buy or not. Such a customer is first taken by surprise; then, after I have informed her of the latest style features and have tried on a few garments, she tells me confidentially that she is expecting a check next week, or something to that effect. Sometimes, on the other hand, she buys that very day. Usually I ask these customers if they would like to be notified when we receive some new stock, and they are nearly always only too glad to leave their names and addresses. One such customer brought me eight others from a little village in Vermont, and I have done quite a rushing mail-order business in that town. Another customer, one of those who were "only looking," wrote a commendatory letter to the superintendent about me. Still another wrote that she had had a charge account in a certain store but was transferring her trade to our store because I had been recommended to her by Mrs. P., the Vermont customer. I am sure that my efforts to win friends for the store are largely accountable for my success, and that in securing the names and addresses of customers I have largely increased my sales.

**Introductory phrases.** There are various ways of starting sales. Many times a transaction seems to spring into being without any distinguishable beginning; on other occasions, to fill in a moment of awkwardness or uncertainty, it is customary to make use of some introductory phrase. The spirit back of these words is of far greater importance than the words themselves, but judicious and felicitous phrasing is always a help in human intercourse. Some expressions

commonly used in starting sales are herewith submitted that the merits or demerits of each may be fully considered. No classification has been attempted, but it is suggested that students arrange these phrases, with additions from their own experience and observation, under three heads: good, doubtful, and objectionable.

1. Have you been attended to?
2. Anything in particular you wanted?
3. Something?
4. What for you?
5. Have you been waited on?
6. Something for *you*?
7. Do you wish to be waited on?
8. Do you wish attention?
9. Something special?
10. Can I help you?
11. What did you want?
12. Something in laces? (In a lace department.)
13. Ninety-eight cents.
14. Yes, sir.
15. May I assist you?
16. Are you looking or do you want to buy?
17. Do you wish attention, lady?
18. Can I interest you in aprons?
19. Did you want something?
20. What can I do for you, madam?
21. Sanitary toothbrush?
22. Something you wanted to buy?
23. Can I tempt you with anything to-day?
24. Something I could show you?
25. That's \$1.25. How do you like it?
26. Do you wish to be served?
27. May I serve you?
28. Have you been served?



**"Serving" customers.** The use of the word "serve" applied to the act of assisting customers is displeasing to some persons; they consider the expression too suggestive of serving food in a restaurant to be appropriate. This is simply a matter of emphasizing one set of associations with a word which is capable of many interpretations and which really signifies the praiseworthy act of ministering unselfishly to the needs of others. Since the service ideal is now prominently featured in advertising and is expressed in numerous practical ways in stores, the verb "to serve" seems to many salespeople the natural term to use in reference to their dealings with customers. It is unquestionably as dignified as the expression "to wait on trade" or "to wait on customers," both of which phrases are often heard, and in England "serving customers" is an expression in common use. As the word is studied and as its application to the highest aspects of things is noted, its worth and desirability are increasingly felt.

An effort should be made to vary the introductory phrase, for no expression, however good, can be used repeatedly without becoming mechanical and meaningless. Again, under certain circumstances, no words of greeting may be needed to start a sale, as when a customer states his errand at the outset or manifests great interest in a certain article on display. In such cases the merchandise should be brought forth for immediate inspection and should always be shown with as little delay as possible.

**Questioning customers.** But it is sometimes perplexing to know what to show to a customer who gives no clue as to the price he wishes to pay or any other leading point about his prospective purchase, and so it happens that some

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS**

1. What spirit does the motto quoted on page 86 express?
2. Relate a shopping experience which you remember agreeably, bringing out especially the points which, at the beginning of the sale, impressed you pleasantly.
3. Relate similarly an experience which left you with an unfavorable impression of the store and the salesperson.
4. Why are salespeople sometimes very slow about approaching customers?
5. What may be the unfortunate results of a slow approach?
6. How do *you*, as a customer, like to be approached?
7. Is there any danger of "overdoing" the approach, and if so, in what respect?
8. What should a salesperson immediately do if he is seated when a customer approaches? if he is talking with a fellow-worker?
9. What is your feeling in regard to the use of "Good morning" as a greeting to a customer?
10. What is your opinion regarding the use of "madam"?
11. Why should terms of endearment not be addressed to a customer?
12. Why should dignity characterize dealings with customers?
13. How may a personal record of customers' names and addresses be of advantage to you in writing sales checks?
14. In what ways may such a record be of service to the charge office?
15. Comment freely on the methods reported by the successful saleswoman of coats. Do you take exception to her practice in any particular?
16. Suggest ways of training your memory to retain names and addresses.
17. Why is it usually inadvisable to start a sale by stating the price of an article? Give two reasons.

18. What would you do if a second customer should approach you while you were engaged in serving a patron?

19. How would you proceed if the second customer were unpleasantly insistent about being served at once?

20. Under what circumstances is it advisable to attempt to serve two customers at once?

21. Explain by means of a concrete example how this may be done successfully.

22. How may the approach to a customer at a bargain table differ from that in an automobile or piano salesroom?

23. What courtesies might be shown in the latter case which would not be possible in the former?

24. Why should merchandise be shown to a customer as soon as possible?

25. Why is prompt service advantageous to the salesperson who renders it?

26. Prove that it is poor policy to ask a customer how much he wishes to pay by citing an instance when you paid more for an article than you expected to when you began looking for it.

27. Why is it usually inadvisable to show the lowest-priced merchandise first? the highest-priced?

28. If you believe that a customer who has been wearing a shoe or a glove of a certain size requires a larger size, by what arguments can you persuade this customer to try a larger size?

29. Why is the exercise of tact essential in the situation presented in the preceding question?

30. Why, in many cases, do shoe manufacturers indicate the size of shoe in a manner unintelligible to customers?

31. How do shoe salesmen usually ascertain the size of shoe required by a customer?

32. Why is it poor salesmanship to sell a customer a garment of unsuitable size? Give three reasons.

33. In what departments would it be desirable to have a tape measure of your own? Why?

34. Why is it important to *study* customers as they approach?
35. How does observation of a customer's mood or state of mind help you to prepare for a sale?
36. What would be your mental attitude toward a customer who was dressed in deep mourning? who appeared to be in a great hurry? who seemed absent-minded? who seemed worried? who was timid? who was overdressed? who referred to a shopping list?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Rewrite the notice "Patrons will confer a favor on the management by not loitering" in such a way as to convey the idea intended without loss of courtesy.
2. Either originate a slogan or find an actual example to compare with each of the following genuine examples quoted from advertisements:

A clothing store: "Where the styles come from."

A grocery store: "Good things to eat."

A department store: "The store accommodating."

A specialty shop: "The specialty shop of originations."

An arts-and-crafts shop: "Honest work ennobles."

In each case state whether you consider your own contribution or the one given here the better, with reasons.

3. The following authentic experience is quoted from a letter which was printed on the editorial page of a leading newspaper:

One morning I arrived at the shopping district a little before the time for opening. The door of the shop, however, stood open, and I entered. I was immediately followed, I may say attacked, by a young lady who informed me that the shop was not open and there would be no one to wait on me. I paid not much attention to her and walked on, but she followed me, repeating her information in various tones of irritable sharpness. By and by I met a man who saw what the trouble was and, offering me a chair, said civilly, "Be kind enough to be seated, madam; the shop will be open in a very few minutes."

4. In the form of a monologue of not fewer than one hundred words, relate this incident as the discourteous girl might have reported it to a friend a few minutes later. Try to bring out the mistaken personal attitude which would find expression in such behavior.

5. Walk all about the street floor of a department store and ride in the elevators. Note every detail which you think would give a customer a pleasant "entering impression." Make a list of these points. Make another list of details which would give an unpleasant entering impression.



## CHAPTER VII

### SELLING POINTS AND THEIR PRESENTATION

No one takes much interest in baseball, tennis, or golf unless he knows the rules of the game, the end which is sought, and unless he has some appreciation of the players' skill. If he learns to play the game himself his interest in it grows rapidly, he thinks and talks about it, and he plays as often as he can. Enthusiasm for the game develops as an outgrowth of knowledge and experience. The player's enthusiastic descriptions of the sport may lead others to take it up.

Enthusiasm springing from actual knowledge is always a powerful factor, and in salesmanship it is perhaps more productive of results than any other one quality. A familiar expression, "the contagion of enthusiasm," suggests the rapid spread of this quickening spirit from one person to another. A salesman who arouses a customer's interest to the pitch of *enthusiasm* has usually won the customer, but he does this effectually only when he knows his merchandise thoroughly and is willing and able to give the customer the full benefit of his knowledge.

**Learning the merchandise.** It is the first duty of a salesman to learn all that he can about the stock he is given to sell, not simply its arrangement in drawers or on shelves and its price, but also its history or manufacture and its essential characteristics or *selling points*. The sources of



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# WEAVING CASHMERE SHAWLS IN INDIA

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information will at first be the buyer and the experienced salespeople in the department, the knowledge thus gained being supplemented by intelligent examination of the goods and by study of labels on merchandise, of advertising matter sent out by manufacturers, of trade journals, and of reference books to be found in public libraries.

**Customers as teachers.** Much may also be gained by thoughtful attention to customers' comments. A man who had never been abroad succeeded to the headship of a retail business dealing exclusively in unusual and choice articles imported from Europe and the Orient. The stock included pictures, hangings, odd pieces of furniture, rare textiles, jars, vases, fine examples of the craftsmanship of workers in leather and metals, and many articles not easily classified, and best expressed by the French phrase *objets d'art*. The new proprietor brought to his work an innate love of beauty and a sensitiveness to color values but not much knowledge of the history or natural setting of the beautiful merchandise offered for sale. But among the customers of the unique shop were many traveled people who talked with pleasure of the memories awakened by a copy of a famous painting; a garden seat carved out of stone; the delicate tracery of a wrought-iron sconce; a binding of finely tooled leather. This man listened with a receptive mind to the observations and reminiscences of his patrons; he not only listened, but as soon as he had a free moment he recorded the information so easily gained. Later he verified certain points and increased his knowledge of them by reading; and finally, he took pains to *remember* all that he had learned and to make use of it when selling goods. Solely through his own efforts he became a well-informed man, a recognized expert in a highly specialized

line of business. In this way his work became a means of broad education, and this may be true in relation to any kind of merchandise, for any commodity may constitute a life study in itself.

**Study of a handkerchief.** Since it is impossible to foresee what points customers will emphasize, what objections will be made, what questions asked, a salesman can never know too much about his merchandise. Without attempting an exhaustive treatment of any line of goods, an outline is given of some of the points which might arise in connection with one familiar article—a handkerchief.

- A. Name of article*
  - 1. Foreign equivalents
  - 2. Derivation of word
  - 3. History of article
- B. Material*
  - 1. Linen
    - a. Kinds*
  - 2. Cotton
    - a. Kinds*
  - 3. Silk
    - a. Kinds*
  - 4. Novelties
    - a. Kinds*
- C. Quality and texture of material (list of ten or twelve adjectives which might suitably be used)*
- D. Durability*
- E. Finish*
  - 1. Hems
    - a. Standard widths*
    - b. Prevailing fashionable width*
    - c. Proper widths for mourning*
    - d. Hemstitching*
    - e. Plain turned hem*
      - (1) Colored
      - (2) White

- f.* Rolled edge
- g.* Buttonholed edge
- h.* Drawn work

## *F.* Workmanship

- 1. Hand
- 2. Machine

## *G.* Style

- 1. Tape borders
  - a.* Meaning of term
  - b.* Varieties
- 2. Embroidered
  - a.* Border
  - b.* Corners (one or more)
  - c.* Hem
  - d.* All-over
  - e.* Kinds of embroidery
    - (1) Hand
    - (2) Machine
    - (3) Hand-loom machine
  - f.* Beauty of design

## *H.* Initials

- 1. Style
  - a.* Block
  - b.* Script
  - c.* Old English

## *I.* Initials and monograms to order

- 1. Styles
- 2. Prices
- 3. Time required to fill orders

## *J.* Sizes

- 1. Smallest
  - 2. Largest
- } for {
  - men
  - women
  - children

## *K.* Prices

- 1. Lowest
- 2. Highest
- 3. Grade most in demand
- 4. Variation (if sold by dozen)

*L. Sources of supply*

1. Foreign
2. Domestic

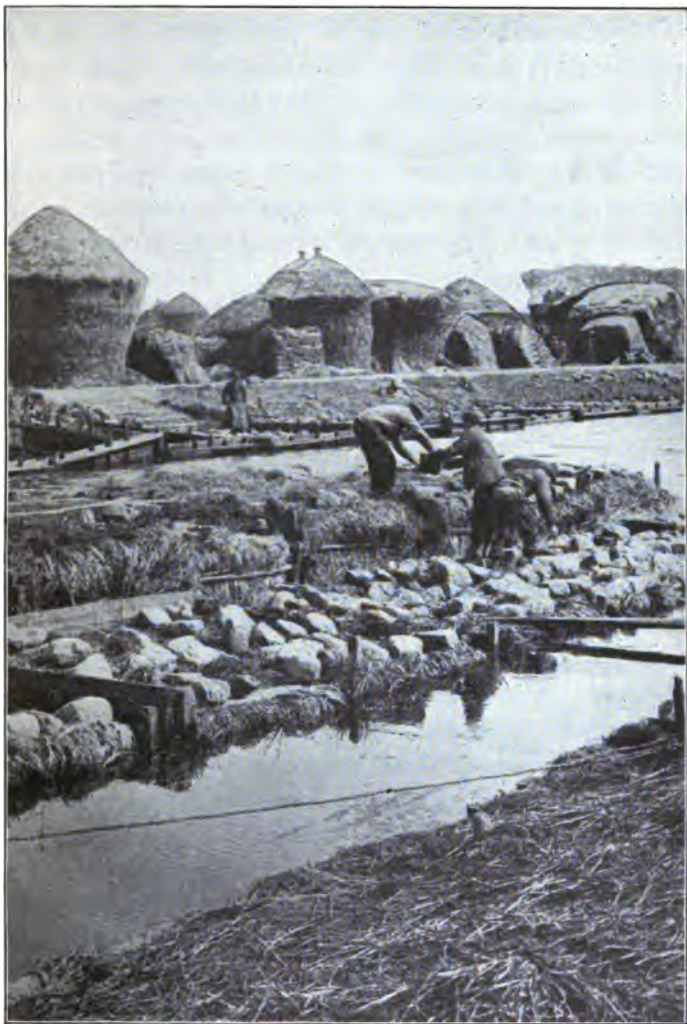
*M. Miscellaneous uses of handkerchiefs*

1. Collar-and-cuff sets
2. Bags
3. Cases, etc.

## SPECIAL QUESTIONS

1. Are colored hems, initials, embroidery, and printed patterns guaranteed fadeless?
2. How may a cotton handkerchief be distinguished from one made of linen?
3. A linen handkerchief costs more than a cotton one. Is it worth the difference in price?
4. What is the correct way to launder handkerchiefs to prevent them from becoming yellow?
5. How may hand embroidery be distinguished from machine embroidery? How may hand hemstitching be distinguished from machine hemstitching?
6. Are silk handkerchiefs practical?
7. Give three reasons why linen is the most desirable of all materials for a handkerchief.

After the points included in the outline have been mastered, the background of the subject should be investigated, especially the history of flax — its use by the ancient Egyptians, who spun incredibly fine yarn of such strength that beautiful specimens of linen wrapped around their mummies are preserved to us to-day, and the discovery of fragments of linen yarn and cloth among the relics of the lake dwellers. There should be knowledge of the countries in which flax grows (chiefly Russia, Belgium, and the British Isles), and it should be possible to visualize its appearance in the field, each slender gray-green stalk topped by a blue blossom so



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RETING FLAX IN THE RIVER LYS, BELGIUM



delicate and ethereal that the poet Longfellow called it the "fairy flax." The beauty and worth of a piece of linen cannot be appreciated until the difficulties of its laborious manufacture are understood: how the long, clean, strong fiber can be released only by a fermenting process called retting, carried on in stagnant pools or slow-flowing streams, and is later freed from bits of bark and stalk by a dusty, choking process of beating. That the spinning and weaving of the finest yarns is sometimes done in dark, damp cellars is another factor in the singularly disagreeable, unwholesome work of making linen. When the story has been read to the end, it will not be hard to justify the price of the choicest handkerchief.

**Use of reference books.** Information concerning the literature, art, history, geography, customs, and costumes of different countries should be gathered as new styles are brought out and new merchandise assembled from all parts of the world. Store libraries should include among their reference books a French as well as an English dictionary, a good encyclopedia, an atlas, volumes on the history of costume, and a general history. Such books, if not available elsewhere, may be consulted at public libraries, where reference librarians are always glad to help readers find the information which they seek.

In accumulating a wealth of knowledge concerning his merchandise, the salesman lays up a store of information which enables him to answer objections, to explain obscure points, and to bring out with enthusiasm and confidence the finer characteristics of the goods he has to sell. He needs this information as a background for selling, and he enjoys the possession of it, but he should bear in mind that much

that he has learned is to be imparted to customers only if they seem interested and if the facts are pertinent to the discussion of the moment. It is a mistake to enter into lengthy explanations of sources and processes as a mere matter of instruction, for most customers would be bored if not antagonized by such a procedure.

**Significance of names.** Special study is often necessary for an understanding of the *names* given to merchandise. When the name is taken from a foreign language, its spelling, pronunciation, and meaning should be learned.

If salespeople understood as do advertisers the commercial value of a good name, they would give more careful attention to the names applied to their merchandise. The fact that the name alone often sells an article is illustrated by the case of a man who, dining in solitude in a restaurant on a cold wintry night, ordered from the bill of fare: "Steamed fruit pudding with sunshine sauce." To a friend who joined him later, he said, "I don't care much for steamed pudding, but that *sunshine sauce* 'got' me."

It is of great importance to bear in mind that different names may be applied to the same article. It is not to be expected that a salesperson will be familiar with every possible name for each article in stock, but if he is asked for something of which he has never heard, he should not say "We have n't it" until he has made sure by tactful inquiry that the store does not carry the desired article under another name or that it has not something nearly enough like it to serve as a substitute. Rubbers or rubber overshoes are sometimes called "goloshes" or "gum shoes," corsets are termed "stays," and samples, "patterns" by English people; "gum bands" is another name for rubber bands.



A correspondent wrote as follows in the *Boston Evening Transcript* of October 21, 1916:

One morning I stopped to buy a pair of overshoes in a department store. I asked for india rubbers. The young lady whom I addressed replied in a prompt, put-an-end-to-the-matter voice, "We don't carry them." As the articles which I had all my life heard called india rubbers were displayed in great profusion on the counters, I persisted until I met a man who condescended to understand what I wanted and brought another young lady to serve me. A little while after, I went to a shop to buy some tooth powder. I asked for it as camphorated-chalk tooth powder. The lady behind the counter had never seen or heard of such a thing. I had often bought it at that very place. Looking around, I saw what I wanted and held it out to her. The name printed on the wrapper was "Camphorated Tooth Powder." Although obviously made of chalk, the word "chalk" was not printed.

I went into another shop to buy a square of thin white silk which I asked for as a handkerchief for the neck. The young lady assured me that not only they had none but they never had had anything of the sort there. Fortunately another one came forward and knew exactly what I wanted. The first one then said, "If you had called it a scarf I should have known what you wanted." I think I was right here as to the name, for most persons expect a scarf to be long and a handkerchief square.

Again I went to buy a pair of slippers at one of the department stores. I had been in the habit of wearing slippers of black suède in the house, and they said they had none of that sort — all of their house slippers had heels. They brought and showed me high-heeled slippers all covered with beads and various decorations quite unsuitable for my purpose, and I was obliged to go without the slippers that day.

But the next time I tried to procure them, I carried an old one with me to show what I wanted. The clerk, this time a man, kindly informed me that those were bedroom slippers. They were perfectly suitable for parlor wear, but that was the name of them.

**Discriminating use of selling points.** It is important to select for each customer the selling points which will make the strongest individual appeal. In the purchase of a handkerchief the latest fashion in hem or embroidery might be the deciding factor for one person, while another would emphasize practical qualities, such as size or texture, rather than style. In a piano the tone is a very important consideration, but some customers would be more particular about the action of the instrument, and still others would put a handsome case above every other consideration. Some persons like to know the history of an article and the origin of a detail in style; others care a great deal about the blending of colors and the effect of lines. That "no selling talk is ready-made" has been truly said; the taste and inclination of the customer and his motive in buying determine what shall be emphasized.

**Importance of truthful statements.** It is fatally easy to fall into a way of saying that which customers apparently wish to hear, of following the line of least resistance, instead, sometimes, of acting with perfect candor. When a person inquires: "Will it wash well?" "Is it durable?" "Do you guarantee this article?" "Is it all wool?" "Is it imported?" salespeople who are not much interested in their work are prone to answer "Yes," without knowing, in some cases, whether they have told the truth or not. If the haphazard answer is incorrect, the salesperson is



**GERSAINT'S SIGNBOARD**

**A painting by Jean Antoine Watteau, showing the origin of the famous Watteau plait, or fold**



guilty of misrepresentation. This is a penal offense in some states, and in at least one state (Massachusetts) an employee making a false statement is specifically included with the employer in the indictment. A fine of from \$10 to \$500 is imposed as a penalty for each offense of this character. The truthful representation of merchandise in advertising and by salespeople is a fundamental principle with all reputable stores.

Some firms even go so far as to offer a pecuniary reward to anyone discovering an inaccurate or false statement in their advertising, and it occasionally happens that advertising space is used to acknowledge an error and to invite customers who have bought merchandise under a misconception to return it and receive their money back. Stores which take so definite a stand for honest dealing must exact undeviating truthfulness from their salespeople if such a policy is to be successfully and consistently carried out.

**Honest opinions.** Certain inquiries involve æsthetic considerations. Advice is asked concerning color combinations, the becomingness of colors and styles, the relative beauty of two similar articles. These queries, because less concrete in nature than those mentioned in the preceding paragraph, are not so seriously involving, for here opinions are solicited rather than facts; nevertheless, salespeople often dodge the question. In regard to this matter a customer has said: "When I ask a salesperson what is the best thing for me, I want him to tell me. Often he tries to find out my preference, and then says he likes that, too. Or else he says that they are all good or that it is merely a matter of taste. And so although I want an honest opinion, I get no help at all." Perhaps nowhere is it harder to obtain trustworthy advice

than in a millinery department. Complaint is frequently made that the average millinery salesperson shows little discrimination in the selection of hats, assuring the customer that everything tried on is extremely becoming.

**Use of English.** If knowledge of merchandise, a nice perception of the most telling points, and wise advice are to attain their greatest potential value, they must be coupled with a suitable and effective medium of expression. For personal as well as professional reasons salespeople should cultivate a careful use of English. Good speech is an indication of intelligence and refinement—qualities which all desire for themselves and which command the confidence and respect of customers. It is surprising how few persons, comparatively speaking, are able to ask a question, make a statement, or give an explanation in a simple, direct, forceful way, chiefly because a habit of clear and orderly thinking has not been established. A distinct mental concept must precede the clear expression of a thought. Therefore, as has been pointed out, salespeople must *know* the facts about their merchandise before they can expect to interest customers in it or convince them of its desirable qualities. The salesperson's own vision of it, his interpretation of its values, must have an unequivocal basis. Then with the employment of suitable language to describe it, he is in possession of a genuine force in selling. It is not the long nor the short, the new nor the old word, but the *exact* word which makes speech effective. Many of us are satisfied with the use of current popular expressions or of words which, partially conveying our meaning, seem to answer the purpose. But slang phrases are not understood by all persons and are offensive to others, and half-truths may give false impressions. Hence,

salesmanship which is otherwise good may be invalidated by a weak use of language. Those who lack power to express their thoughts correctly and forcefully may educate themselves in this respect by careful observation of the language of persons who do speak well, by good reading, by use of the dictionary, and by a firm resolution to eliminate objectionable, illogical, and ungrammatical expressions.

It is possible to speak with reasonable correctness and a fair degree of accuracy and yet fail to be interesting because of a monotonous use of words. Such adjectives as "pretty" and "nice" have lost much of their original force through overuse. Variety, then, should be added to accuracy and correctness as an essential characteristic of effective language.

**The uncommunicative salesman.** A general lack of appreciation of the possibilities of language is shown by the abuse or neglect of this means of communication. Some salespeople seem to be positively unwilling to talk, volunteering no information about their merchandise unless possibly a mechanical statement of price.

A certain man who was extremely fond of coffee and who had been dissatisfied for some time with the brand served at his own table went to the best grocery store in town resolved to get some information about coffee and with the intention of paying a high price, if necessary, for a brand which the salesman could heartily recommend. The following conversation took place:

**CUSTOMER.** I want some good coffee; the coffee we have been using lacks flavor.

**SALESPERSON.** We have coffee at 32 cents, 38 cents, 45 cents, 50 cents, and 53 cents a pound. What grade do you want?

This brief, not to say curt, statement so cooled the customer's interest that he left the store and bought his coffee

elsewhere of a salesman who was both interested and intelligent enough to "talk up" his goods.

Here is another case of a salesman who appeared reluctant to be of any service to his customer.

A man went to a bookstore to order a back number of a magazine. The conversation which ensued between him and the salesman is reported literally.

CUSTOMER. Do you supply back numbers of magazines?

SALESPERSON. How far back?

CUSTOMER. Last December. *Harper's Magazine*.

SALESPERSON. Well, I don't know. I might be able to get it, but it will cost a good deal.

CUSTOMER. How much do you think it will cost?

SALESPERSON. Well, I don't know.

CUSTOMER. Do you suppose it will be as much as \$1? I should n't be willing to pay so much as that.

SALESPERSON. No, it won't be so much as that.

CUSTOMER. Well, if it is n't more than 50 cents I'll take it if you can get it for me.

SALESPERSON (*taking out order book*). What's the name?

(CUSTOMER *gives name*.)

CUSTOMER. When do you think it will come?

SALESPERSON. Oh, I don't believe it will be here inside of a week.

CUSTOMER. Shall I call or will you let me know when it comes?

SALESPERSON. Well . . . (*Hesitates*)

CUSTOMER. I will call a week from to-day.

SALESPERSON. All right.

**Talking at random.** Some salespeople say altogether too much or talk at the wrong time, allowing customers no time for reflection.

A calendar of the type having a quotation for each month had attracted the attention of a passer-by. He thought he



would buy it if the quotations pleased him, but he wished to read them all before deciding. As he turned each leaf and began to read, the salesman invariably interrupted his thought with some commendatory remark. "This is a very pretty calendar," "It is one of our most popular calendars," "The quotations are very good," he talked on, until the exasperated customer decided not to buy a calendar that day. The salesman's poor judgment lost the sale.

Again a salesperson may seem to talk for the sake of talking, with no thought or purpose back of the words.

A girl who was managing an amateur production of a play wished to purchase a pair of candlesticks for a part of the furnishing of a peasant's cottage. She did not explain what use she intended to make of the candlesticks, simply stating that she wanted something inexpensive. The saleswoman placed before her candlesticks of brass, glass, and wrought iron, remarking, as she indicated her own preference for the glass ones, "These will be the best for your purpose." Suddenly realizing that she was unaware of the customer's purpose, she asked, "What do you want them for, anyway?"

**Influence of the voice.** The importance of the use of the voice is often overlooked. Sensitiveness to the quality of the voice varies with individuals, but there is no doubt that everyone is consciously or unconsciously affected by the tone and expression of persons speaking to him.

Americans are much and justly criticized for their unpleasant voices, which, in many cases, express a nervousness and strain taxing to both speaker and listener. Responsibility for this defect is sometimes attributed to the climate of this country, but more often the condition is explained by the speed and energy of American life, which allows little time

for relaxation of mind or muscle and takes little account, it is said, of the cultivation of the finer personal assets. But it is, after all, not a national nor a climatic matter but an individual one. It may be that only a favored few are endowed by nature with rich and beautiful voices, but the opportunity to improve such instrument of expression as we have is open to all. Sweetness, freedom, and depth of tone, carrying quality, distinctness of utterance, agreeable and expressive modulation, — these are among the vocal qualities which all should strive to acquire. The proper use and training of the voice is the work of specialists, but those who earnestly desire to improve can do much for themselves. Deep breathing, a relaxed throat, and a mind and body freed from nervous tension are goals of effort. It should be remembered that a spirit of anger, irritation, indifference, or scorn may be revealed more clearly by the voice than by words, and that even so trifling a matter as an unpleasant *tone* may arouse such a feeling of resentment and antagonism in a customer as to render ineffectual much good salesmanship.

#### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. What questions might you ask or what points should you wish emphasized if you were buying one-half dozen handkerchiefs for your own use? if you were buying a handkerchief for a Christmas gift?
2. Copy the outline on handkerchiefs into your notebook and supply all the information called for so far as possible.
3. Give six good selling points about any article of clothing you have bought recently.
4. What points do you think should be brought out in the sale of a coat? a hat? an umbrella? a bag for schoolbooks? a pencil box? a box of candy? a pair of roller skates?

5. Without resorting to direct questions, how may a salesperson discover the points of importance to a customer in connection with the merchandise under consideration?

6. What features in material for a suit would appeal strongly to a *practical* customer? What other characteristics might be of greater interest to an *artist*?

7. How can you tell what points to emphasize in showing and explaining merchandise to different types of customers?

8. Under what circumstances is price a significant selling point?

9. Why may the bare statement of the price of an article, without explanation of its qualities, be detrimental to a sale?

10. Show that popularity of an article is a good selling point under certain conditions and a poor one under others.

11. Make a list of all the selling points which might come under the head of "Workmanship" in a well-tailored suit for yourself; under the head of "Durability" in a rug; under the head of "Beauty" in a piece of rich crimson velvet; under the head of "Practical Advantages" in a glass measuring cup.

12. Make a list of five adjectives which might be used appropriately in describing

A five-dollar baby-dress of white nainsook

A lady's suit of navy-blue faille silk

The Scribner illustrated edition of Stevenson's "Black Arrow"

A fountain pen

White-enameled cooking dishes

A mahogany tea wagon

Building blocks

A "kewpie"

An oilskin raincoat

An alarm clock

A bunch of fresh violets

Canned alcohol

(Any eight items may be chosen.)

13. Imagine yourself selling to a customer the one of the three following articles in which you are most interested :

- A canoe
- An electric iron
- A velours hat

Give all the arguments which you might advance in favor of the article and answer possible objections.

14. Do you say "doughnut" or "cruller"? "spider," "skillet," or "frying-pan"? "jug" or "pitcher"? "mug" or "cup"? "glass" or "tumbler"? Discuss these and other distinctions in words with your friends, and discover whether or not you are applying certain terms and phrases in the same way.

15. Tell why it is good salesmanship to describe and explain merchandise to customers. Give three reasons.

16. Name an article of merchandise suitably characterized by each of the following adjectives :

substantial	handsome	charming
quaint	elaborate	ingenious
ornate	filmy	comforting
choice	pure	crisp
bizarre	convenient	elegant

17. Expressing the idea of *frailty*, describe, using a different word in each case :

- A china cup
- Fresh heliotrope
- Rare old lace
- A poor grade of tissue paper

18. Pronounce the following words :

athletic	attack
alpaca	address
deficit	height

Start a list of words often mispronounced and add to it from time to time.

19. Express in one word the antonym of each of the following :

simple	compact	unique
dangerous	original	transparent
lasting	theoretical	conservative
lustrous	antique	complete
novel	brittle	striking

20. Make a list of fifteen commonly used adjectives which you consider questionable.

21. If you were unable to answer a question about your merchandise, what would you do?

22. Look up the meaning of "slang" in a large dictionary and write the definition in your notebook.

23. How does the use of slang impoverish vocabulary?

24. Why do people use slang?

25. What is your opinion concerning its use?

26. Why is slang constantly changing?

27. Put in sentence form ten of the commonest errors in grammatical forms that you hear. Write the correct form after each sentence.

28. Is it better to say "Gents' Furnishings" or "Men's Furnishings"? to refer to a suite of rooms as a "flat" or an "apartment"? to speak of "pants" or "trousers"? a "phone" or a "telephone"?

29. Start a list in your notebook of new words learned this year. If you are uncertain about the meaning of any word, look it up in the dictionary and write the meaning after the word.

30. What is meant by clear articulation? Illustrate, giving examples of good and bad articulation.

31. Why is it desirable to articulate clearly?

32. Why do actors and public speakers cultivate this characteristic of good speech?

33. In what ways can you improve your own language? In what ways can you improve your own voice?

34. Compare "I am out of that style" with "We are out of that style." Which pronoun is preferable, and why?

35. Why is it a mistake to try to show merchandise with a pencil in your hand?

36. Why should a salesperson never speak disparagingly of his merchandise?

37. Why should he be equally careful not to disparage a competitor's merchandise?

38. Discuss the cases of poor salesmanship given on pages 117-119. How would *you* have conducted these sales?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Explain fully in writing eighteen of the following terms. Illustrate with sketches, pictures, or samples whenever possible.

Robespierre collar	Russian crash
Bolero jacket	Copenhagen blue
Directoire coat	Chuddah shawl
Moyen-âge fashions	Cashmere shawl
Russian blouse	Dresden china
Mandarin coat	Gainsborough hat
Scotch tartan	Van Dyck collar
Tyrolean cap	Shaker cape
Mexican sombrero	Kate Greenaway styles
Roman sash	Cantigalli ware
Navajo blanket	Madeira embroidery
Brittany pottery	Mission furniture
Watteau plait	Anatolian curtains
Period furniture	Persian patterns
Morris chair	Pompeian red
India mull	Sheffield plate

2. *a.* Consult a rhetoric for the exact meaning of the following words:

circumlocution	tautology
verbosity	hyperbole
redundancy	ambiguity



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WEAVING A NAVAJO BLANKET





- b.* Explain the weakness of each form of expression.
  - c.* Illustrate with a sentence or paragraph the principle involved in each case, using, for the first three, answers to a customer wishing to be directed to certain parts of a store; and, for the last three, descriptions of merchandise.
  - d.* Rewrite the sentences or paragraphs in good style.
  - e.* Enter the entire exercise in your notebook.
3. Make a list of fifteen widely advertised products whose names are suggestive of excellent selling points. Analyze the words which make each name effective and show how they strengthen the advertising of the product.
4. Originate a trade name for exploiting a new brand, make, or variety of each of the following :

A bicycle brake	A flavoring extract
A laundry soap	A weather strip
Pancake flour	An ice pick
A hammock	A perfume
A lunch basket	A kerosene stove

Try to express in a catchword or phrase the point which you think it most important to emphasize.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUDING SALES

A sale may be divided into three parts: (1) approaching the customer; (2) presenting the merchandise; (3) concluding the sale. Care, thoughtfulness, and skill are required at each stage, but it is ordinarily the third stage—the time when the transaction is to be terminated—that is the most critical. Failure to grasp the customer's mood or meaning, an ill-timed remark, a misplaced emphasis, or a relaxation of judicious effort may result in the loss of a sale which had been well-managed to this point.

**The indefinite customer.** Frequently customers have only very vague notions as to what they want to buy, and unless the salesperson is alive to the situation and ready to make the most of every hint and suggestion dropped by the customer, the sale is likely to be lost because the idea back of the purchase is not completely formulated in the customer's mind. Suppose a woman announces her wish to look at silk waists. She thinks she wants blue, but does not know about the style. The salesperson begins showing waist after waist, intending to continue so doing until some comment is made. But the customer, who is pleased in a way with all the waists, says little; she gradually becomes confused as a result of seeing too many styles and, losing sight of the main issue, is uncertain whether a strictly tailored or a semi-dressy model is what she needs. Not having observed the

customer closely, the salesperson does not know what to emphasize, and the customer finally says with evident disappointment (for she really needs a waist and has come in with the intention of buying it) that she "will not decide to-day." A more skillful salesperson would have proceeded more slowly, would have shown less, and, having gained some clue from the customer's response to each waist displayed, would have been ready and able to help in a wise selection.

**The positive customer.** Let us imagine another type of customer, who may show a decided preference for a style of waist which, for some reason, the salesperson would prefer not to sell to her. This hesitancy might be explained by a shortage of sizes in that model, but is more commonly born of an impulse to save a customer from buying a garment unsuited to the requirements of her age, build, or coloring. Under such circumstances a tactful effort should be made to interest her in something more appropriate. But if the customer is clearly not open to suggestion, is of the unyielding type that, knowing its own mind, will not be moved, a vigorous attempt to substitute a different style would not only be futile but would probably result in a lost sale. Determined, forceful customers resent interference with their plans. Elderly persons, also, are sometimes inclined to take amiss well-meant efforts of younger salespeople, feeling distrustful of their motives or lacking confidence in their judgment. The gentle art of persuasion should therefore be practiced with diplomacy.

**The undecided customer.** What is to be done when a customer seems unable to choose the single waist which she requires from among three or four which attract her about equally? If she had them all at home, with plenty of time

for deliberation, she would undoubtedly find one of them more satisfactory than the others. Ordinarily it is better business all around that this decision be made in the store, and it rests with the salesperson to bring this about. There are no invariable rules in salesmanship, but some suggestions may be offered for dealing with cases of this kind.

I. *Narrowing the sale.* An observant salesperson will be able to judge which waist, on the whole, is the most attractive to the customer and will gradually withdraw or lay aside at a moderate distance, one by one, the articles less admired. Then, whereas the customer's thought might have been running thus: "I really like this one best, but that one has handsomer buttons" or "This is just what I need, but that one has the new pocket," her attention, instead of being scattered over consideration of the merits of four good waists, becomes centered on a comparison of two and a choice between them. This important principle of salesmanship is called *narrowing the sale*.

II. *Emphasizing the best points.* The process developed in (I) may be hastened and strengthened by a reiteration of the points which had seemed previously to count most with the customer. Perhaps the color will appeal very strongly to one customer, in which case its beauty, or the attractiveness of the combination with the customer's suit, or the fact that it is new may be referred to; the popular name of the color may be given; the waist may be taken to the window that its hue may be more clearly seen by daylight. If becomingness or fit bids fair to be the deciding factor, the customer may like to try the waist on a second time; if style is uppermost in her mind, to see the waist on someone else may help to solve her problem.



A DEMONSTRATION SALE



III. *Exercise of judgment.* The amount of talking which is wise at this juncture, the emphasis placed on certain points, and the length of time allowed for quiet reflection on the customer's part are all matters demanding the most discriminating judgment. Two essential points should be kept in mind: (1) there should be no appearance of *over-urging*, lest a customer feel that she has been driven into a purchase against her will, and (2) the salesperson's comments should be brief, pointed, and not continuous.

**Broadening the customer's outlook.** A sale is sometimes lost because a customer looks at an article from only one point of view, and that a very limited one. If no one takes the trouble to present the wide and interesting possibilities of the merchandise under consideration, some persons fail to see its value or its desirability. A salesman should keep it constantly in mind that the average customer has little imagination and should try to picture to himself the varying circumstances which might be connected with the use of any article which he is given to sell. Such visualizing of the article will suggest additional arguments and will make it possible to bring out points which might not occur to a customer until long afterward. Suppose that a cream-whipper is the object of a sale. One naturally thinks of the many ways in which whipped cream is served; of the saving of labor effected by the use of a mechanical whipper; of the fact that the same amount of cream goes farther whipped than plain; that a good cream-whipper is more convenient, quicker, and neater than an egg-beater; that having only one function to perform it is always ready for use; that whipped cream adds to the delicacy, daintiness, and appetizing appearance of a dessert, etc. The intelligent presentation

of new, valid arguments brings out the desirability of the convenient tool and wins the customer by conviction.

**Demonstrating the merchandise.** Another way of stimulating a customer's imagination and interest is by showing a piece of merchandise in combination with something else with which it may appropriately be used. The more closely this combination approximates the customer's intended use of the material, the better. For example, if dainty lace to trim a summer dress is desired, the edge may be shown with a piece of fine muslin, lawn, or organdie. The beauty and usability of vases and flower-holders is brought out by an artistic arrangement of flowers in them. Book-ends look better and are more suggestive if good, well-bound books are placed between them — they would never be set up without books in a person's home. A breakfast-set tastefully arranged on a small table as if about to be used makes a stronger appeal to a housewife than do the different pieces piled on a shelf. This method of selling, which strongly suggests the *use* of the merchandise, is a kind of simple demonstration, and everything can be demonstrated to some extent.

**Concentration born of interest.** It is difficult to hold undecided customers and slow buyers and sell anything to them unless undivided attention is given to the problem. This concentration is hard for those whose thoughts seem to stray involuntarily to irrelevant topics. Home and school training and self-discipline may avail much in teaching thought-direction and thought-control, but perhaps the essence of the whole matter is summed up in the one word *interest*. This is illustrated by the common experience of becoming so absorbed in a play or a book or in the performance of a master musician as to become oblivious to everything else



for the time being. Salespeople who are genuinely interested in their merchandise because they have studied it enough to appreciate it, and who are imbued with the modern spirit of business,—service to customers,—will seldom lack that concentration which counts so much in successful selling.

**Interruptions.** The most earnest efforts to achieve concentration may, however, be set at naught by unfortunate interruptions, of which the following are common examples : (1) customers inconsiderately ask all sorts of questions of salespeople who are engrossed in sales ; (2) salespeople make unnecessary remarks to co-workers and so divert attention at critical moments ; (3) a salesman is sometimes called to the telephone when about to consummate a sale.

In the first case courtesy demands that a customer be politely answered, but the reply may be as brief as is consistent with good service ; the second case need not occur many times if the salesman will take a dignified stand with his fellow-workers in regard to the seriousness of his work ; in the third case the call must be answered, and circumstances will dictate how best to serve the waiting customer. Self-control and resourcefulness are valuable allies in such unexpected situations, enabling one to do the right thing at the right moment without nervous or mental perturbation.

**Meeting difficulties.** It is to be feared that sales are sometimes lost because salespeople are too indolent or too indifferent to do their full part in meeting objections, procuring information, or seeking the help of a higher authority. The sale recounted in the following incident would have been lost if the salesman had not taken the trouble to meet with authority the difficulties raised by the customer.

A child's mahogany chair was desired. There were only three chairs in stock, and as all had been on display they were somewhat rubbed and dulled from handling. The customer selected the one which she liked best, and said she would take the chair if the price were lowered on account of its shopworn appearance. Although the salesman knew that the policy of the house prohibited the marking down of any piece of merchandise in the presence of a customer, he offered to see the buyer about it. Before leaving for this purpose he took pains to have the customer comfortably seated. He soon brought back authoritative word that the chair could not be reduced, but that before delivering it the store would have it well rubbed and polished, restoring its original freshness. As the customer had intended to take it with her in her automobile, she objected to the delay which this treatment would entail.

"What would they put on to freshen it?" she asked.

"A light furniture oil such as you use for rubbing up tables and chairs in your home," was the reply.

"Well, then, I'll take it and have it done at home rather than wait."

The sale was concluded easily and pleasantly and seemingly to the customer's entire satisfaction.

**Unpleasant publicity.** A salesman occasionally obtains desired information so awkwardly, discourteously, or unwillingly that a customer loses all interest in the article which had at first seemed attractive.

A customer wished to get a soap dish to go in a green-and-white bathroom. She had selected a plain white-enameled one, and was about to pay for it when she noticed on another table a similar dish in green and white. "There," she said to herself, "if that is n't too expensive, I'll get that." She inquired the price, but the salesgirl did not know.

Another salesgirl near by did not know. Then the first girl shouted to a man far away in the rear of the department: "Say, what is the price of this green soap dish? The lady does n't want to buy it, but she wants to know the price." The customer did not buy it.

**Excuses for not buying.** Many excuses are offered for not purchasing merchandise which has been examined, and sometimes these statements are merely roundabout ways of saying, "I do not want it." Such remarks should always be taken in a professional rather than a personal spirit, without manifestation of disappointment, and nearly always some fitting response may be made which will leave a good impression and may lead to the customer's return. A list of specimen excuses is given. The student is asked to consider what reply, if any, may be made with good effect, keeping always in mind the possibility of winning a sale even at this point, or, if the customer is not to be won, the importance of impressing him in such a way that he may wish to return at some time in the future.

1. I am in too much of a hurry to decide to-day.
2. I want to look elsewhere first.
3. I can get it cheaper at A's.
4. I will ask a friend to come in and look at it.
5. It is more than I expected to pay.
6. I have n't enough money with me to get it to-day.
7. I will wait until the goods are marked down.
8. I want my husband to see it.
9. I won't decide to-day.
10. I am looking up the matter for a friend.
11. I am too tired to know what I want.
12. I can't get it until I know whether it matches my goods.
13. It is different from the make you carried last year.

14. I must think it over.
15. I think I will buy the goods and have my dressmaker make me something.
16. It does n't fit well enough.
17. The new styles seem so queer.
18. Everything is so expensive.
19. I have brought the wrong glasses and can't see very well.
20. I prefer to get this at B's if I can, because I have a charge account there.
21. I want something nicer.
22. This is not the color I had in mind.
23. I want to look in the basement before deciding.
24. I don't want to pay for alterations.

**Courtesy at end of sale.** Salespeople should be mindful of customers and attentive to their needs as long as they remain in the department. The delay incident to wrapping bundles and obtaining change should be made to seem as short as possible by the showing of new merchandise or of advertising matter, or by conversation if customers are so inclined. But if a salesman is not at liberty to stay with a customer at this stage because others are waiting to be served, he should keep the former patron in mind until bundle and change are delivered; that is, until the sale is actually completed.

Customers should be helped with their wraps, their bundles, and their children. As at the beginning of the sale there should always be an expressed or implied greeting, so at the end, in addition to "Thank you," farewell should be expressed by a smile and slight inclination of the head. Some salespeople say "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" as a customer is leaving. This polite custom is very generally practiced in foreign countries, but, oddly enough, it is not always regarded with favor in the United States.

A courteous leave-taking will go a long way toward making a customer forgive and forget mistakes, disappointments, and omissions in service. The proprietor of a certain drug store laid the foundation for future business with at least one customer by his politeness at the end of an interview. The customer had asked for a staple article which he was unable to supply. He expressed regret that the stock which he had just taken over was incomplete, then, courteously opening the door and smiling, he remarked, "Thank you for coming in."

**Final impression.** It is at the conclusion of the sale that the customer receives his final impression of the person who has served him, of the department, and possibly of the store as a whole. It is of the utmost importance that his mind be filled with pleasant memories of the transaction. Certain ideas and associations are linked with every experience. The mere words "Fourth of July" must bring to the mind of every American many ideas, memories, and pictures. Firecrackers, the Stars and Stripes floating in the breeze, fireworks illuminating and enlivening a warm summer evening, a picnic, a dinner of salmon and green peas, — such are some of the agreeable memories evoked by the phrase. To some, however, the recollection of the Fourth of July can never be happy because of some accident or loss which occurred on that day, some distressing experience which the date never fails to recall.

The psychological principle of the association of ideas is highly applicable to salesmanship. Why is it that a customer will go year after year to the same store and the same salesman for shoes, when perhaps another store, more conveniently located, carries the same goods or a line equally satisfactory? It is because shoes are associated in that customer's mind

with a certain store, department, and salesman, and the service has always been so good that he would not think of going elsewhere to supply his need. When a purchase of any article of clothing, a hat, for instance, is being discussed by two friends, how often one of them remarks: "I always go to Miss C — for my hats. She seems to know just what I ought to have." To quote a well-known advertisement, "There's a reason."

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Why is it usually better that a customer make a selection of merchandise in the store than at home?

2. What advantages do you see in home selection? What disadvantages?

3. What does sending goods "on approval" mean?

4. Why should salespeople talk comparatively little when trying to close sales?

5. Why is it inadvisable to continue presenting arguments after a customer has decided to purchase?

6. What different uses for a thermos bottle might you suggest to a customer who was carefully considering the purchase of one? an electric flash light? a middy blouse? a jackknife?

7. Explain how you would *demonstrate* the desirable qualities of a magnifying glass, a fountain pen, a baseball glove, an umbrella, a pack of playing cards, drapery curtains.

8. Describe a time when you were so completely absorbed as to forget everything but your main interest. Analyze the reasons for your absorption.

9. If a customer who interrupts a sale wishes more help or information than you can give him at the time, what should you do?

10. If before you had finished with a customer a second one should ask you to wait on him because he was in a hurry, what would be your policy?

11. Show by means of concrete examples that a salesperson might sometimes be justified in interrupting the sale of a fellow-worker.

12. How may a necessary interruption be managed courteously?

13. Give examples of unnecessary interruptions. What should be the attitude of the salesperson addressed under the circumstances described?

14. If you were called to the telephone while serving a customer, what would you say upon leaving the customer?

15. If you feel that you are failing with a customer, yet think that he desires to purchase, what should you do?

16. Under what circumstances might it be advisable for a salesperson to leave a customer for a short time during the last part of a sale?

17. Mention three cases in which the advantage of immediate buying might be a forceful argument in closing a sale.

18. What is meant by "anticipating objections"? Give three examples to show how this may be done.

19. From the standpoint of convincingness, discuss the relative merits of the following positive and negative statements:

*a.* It is fast color. It will not fade.

*b.* This is a new model.

This is not a last year's model.

*c.* Is this the pattern you wish?

This is n't the pattern you had in mind, is it?

*d.* These paints are safe for children.

These paints will not poison your child.

20. What should be done in case of prolonged delay in the wrapping of bundles or the return of change?

21. Describe the most approved method of counting back change, assuming for purposes of illustration that a customer had handed you a \$2 bill in payment for a 57-cent purchase.

22. What are the merits of the method described?

23. Why is it a good plan to show merchandise to a customer who is waiting for a parcel or change?

24. What kind of merchandise would you select as best suited for this filling-in time?

25. In a charge sale is it necessary to mention the price of an article sold if a customer does not inquire? Give reasons for your answer.

26. If you think the price should be mentioned under these circumstances, how may it be brought in unobtrusively?

27. If a customer has several small bundles, what courteous suggestion may be made?

28. If after a customer has departed you discover that he has left some of his possessions, what should you do?

29. Why is it right to express gratitude to customers who purchase?

30. What is your feeling in regard to the greeting "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" at the end of a sale?

31. Which is better: "Come in again, won't you?" or "I hope you will come again." Why?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Observe a sale in three different stores:

- a. A 5-and-10-cent store.
- b. A grocery store.
- c. A department store.

2. Note carefully all points in the *closing* of the sale and write a critical description of this part of each transaction. Include the following topics if possible:

- a. What factors appeared to influence the customer's decision?
- b. Did the customer seem satisfied at the end?
- c. If any interruptions occurred, state what they were and how they were handled.
- d. What was done to fill in any time of waiting for change or parcel?



- e.* How was the sale acknowledged at the end?
- f.* In what ways was the customer shown courtesy?
- g.* If you had been the salesperson, what should you have done differently?
- h.* What was the most commendable point in each sale? What was the least commendable?

3. Bearing in mind that the last thing said or done usually leaves a deep impression, consider "courteous closings" this week.

- a.* Explain what you mean by a courteous ending of a telephone conversation. Give an example.
- b.* How may courtesy be shown in leaving an elevator? a street car?
- c.* If you were applying for a position, what would courtesy demand of you at the end of the interview?
- d.* Discuss any experience of the week which has impressed you with the value of a courteous leave-taking or ending.
- e.* Sum up the points made in the answers to the preceding questions and apply them to a sale.

## CHAPTER IX

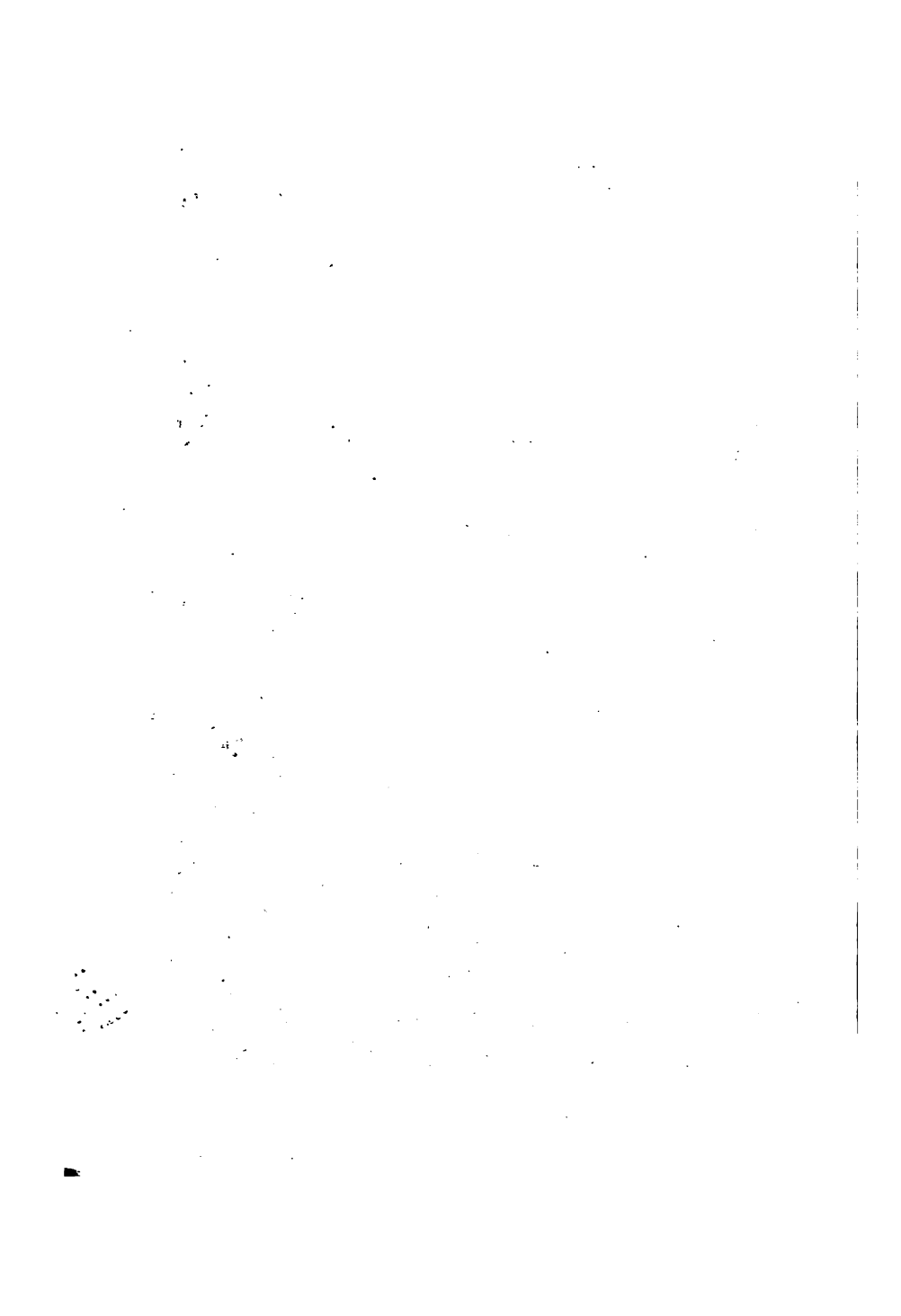
### SUGGESTION AND SUBSTITUTION

"What is the value of window displays?" Without giving much thought to the matter the average person would probably answer, "To attract the attention of customers." This is true, but it is not the whole truth. If merchandise on display in a window is attractive enough to cause a woman to stop and look at it, she will almost invariably think of herself, her family, or her friends in connection with it. If it is a suit display she will presumably begin to consider the purchase of a suit for herself, and if the styles exhibited please her, the chances are good that she will buy a suit in that store. If toilet goods or small wares are shown, most observers will note something long needed which they will decide to purchase on the spot before it is again forgotten. A display of kitchen goods at "ten per cent off" is a reminder that it is a good plan to buy needed utensils when prices are especially low. In other words, window displays are chiefly valuable for their *suggestive* power.

**Starting sales by suggestion.** Suggestive selling, or selling by suggestion, is one of the most interesting opportunities in salesmanship. It may sometimes be effectively applied in starting a sale. The wares of demonstrators would receive scant attention if they were not somewhat aggressively exploited by their agents, who invite attention by offering samples of their goods. While a prospective customer sips



A FLOWER SHOP'S EASTER DISPLAY



a cup of coffee or munches a biscuit, the demonstrator sets forth the merits of his commodity. If such an invitation to buy is not made unpleasantly urgent, the method is entirely legitimate and is productive of excellent results.

A customer who appears to have time at his command but who expresses no specific desire to be shown a certain line of merchandise may become interested and may purchase something if the suggestion is presented in an attractive and reasonable way. Suppose such a person, a woman, has wandered into a linen section. She may have no expectation of buying anything, but she likes linens and therefore takes pleasure in looking about the department. At a favorable moment a salesman may inquire: "Have you seen the new line of Webb's towels which we have just received from Belfast? They are extra heavy huck, good size, and remarkably good value at \$3 a dozen." Or he may speak of a "new luncheon set, serviceable, yet dainty, of fine, firm linen with hand-embroidered edge." In addition to describing the merchandise, he will, of course, show it. No sale may result at the time, but in the long run the effort will not be wasted.

Two kinds of merchandise may be so arranged as to sell each other by suggesting the desirability of the combination. This principle is delightfully illustrated in the charming flower shop shown on page 145. So perfect is the arrangement of flowers in the beautiful baskets, jars, and vases carried by the shop that flowers and receptacles are alike irresistible. In this case it may seem that the merchandise does all the suggesting, but its suggestive power is due to the artistic sense and imagination of the person who arranged the display, knowing what would attract the public.

**Continuing sales by suggestion.** In many cases sales are started readily enough by a customer's asking for a definite thing which is easily supplied, but sales may frequently be *continued* by a skillful use of suggestion. A man, for example, buys a sweater at a sporting-goods house. He explains that a heavier grade than is first shown is needed because he is going on a two weeks' fishing trip and will require a very warm garment. This hint is enough for the salesman. Being an experienced angler himself, he readily pictures the conditions which the customer will meet—the mild discomforts and occasional bad luck which accompany such excursions as well as their delightful and exhilarating features. With genuine enthusiasm he suggests one thing after another which he knows to be useful to fishermen and campers. Some of the articles mentioned have been already obtained, but he succeeds in selling, in addition to the sweater, an oilskin coat, a compass, a light, folding lantern, a preparation to ward off mosquitoes, and a cheap watch with a leather fob. The customer is delighted with his purchases; his holiday mood is heightened; and he feels that the salesman who threw himself so heartily into the situation is a friend for life. In such simple and natural ways customers are agreeably led to make purchases which might otherwise not have been made at all or, more likely, would have been made at a later day in another store.

**Avoidance of overpersuasion.** Suggestive selling becomes unethical when goods are pressed so urgently that a customer buys against his will and judgment. This is one of the most serious errors which a salesman can commit. The goods should be presented as being merely of possible interest and use, and the response of the customer should dictate further

action. Thus handled, suggestion may prove a real service in reminding customers of needs overlooked or in bringing to their attention new merchandise which they are glad to possess. Many a customer is grateful for help so easily obtained.

A saleswoman in a children's clothing department related this experience :

While on their way to the *matinée*, two ladies were attracted by a child's dress displayed in our window. It was of smocked chambray and was specially priced at \$1.50. They came to the department, and after examining the dress with a good deal of care, bought four of that style. Unaware that they were intending to go to the theater, I suggested other dresses and one lady said to the other, "This is so interesting and the young lady seems so willing to show us everything, let's give up the *matinée*." The fact that they were seated in comfortable chairs and that the department was quiet and orderly may have been partly responsible for their decision to remain in the store. As I showed various models the customers expressed surprise; they had not known that there were so many pretty styles and materials, they said. I sold four more gingham dresses at \$1.95 upwards, a French linen dress at \$5, and two middy blouses and skirts. One of the customers was so pleased with our merchandise that she opened an account.

**Coöperation with other departments.** Suggestive selling has more than one application. The most valuable salespeople are interested not alone in increasing their own sales and the business of their own departments but also in extending the business and usefulness of the store as a whole. Salespeople should form the habit of thinking of the merchandise which they are asked to sell in relation to other

lines of goods with which it is closely associated. A great many women buy a suit in the spring and another in the autumn. Nearly always a waist and gloves to go with the suit are purchased within a month. It is obvious that a customer will save time and trouble by selecting the waist and gloves immediately after buying the suit, while she can easily try them with it. If this is done, this unit of clothing, as it may be called, will all be ready at the same time, and the customer will not be subjected to the inconvenience of buying something in a hurry to meet an unexpected demand.

Salespeople who have a practical and thorough understanding of all phases of their work, and who really take pleasure in helping customers find the thing which best meets their needs, are often able to make suggestions which are gratefully accepted. That such thoughtful service may sometimes involve personal sacrifice is shown by the following incident :

The parents of a young lady about to be married set out to buy her wedding veil, as she was unable to attend to this purchase herself. When, many years before, her mother had procured her own wedding veil, she had bought the requisite amount of tulle, and the veil had been fashioned at home. So she and her husband went to the veiling department prepared to repeat this experience. The girl who waited on them said she had the material and would be glad to sell it to them, but that most people preferred to buy the veils all made, ready to wear. This caused less trouble, and the veil was sure to be right. She referred them to the wedding-outfit section on another floor and suggested that they ask for Miss S. As the advice seemed good, the parents followed it and secured the services of Miss S., who first gave them chairs, then asked which girl on the floor was most like their daughter in appearance. The girl selected served as model,



and the sale was soon made, so pleasantly, comfortably, and competently that the parents related the experience to their friends, always mentioning the two "exceptionally nice girls" who had served them so well. It is thoughtful salesmanship like this which wins the confidence and good-will of the public.

Salespeople should hold themselves responsible for knowledge of all lines of merchandise closely related to their own. Occasionally a buyer places the same kind of merchandise on sale in more than one part of a store. Those who sell in the regular department should know about these isolated offerings, which are usually specially priced and which sometimes please customers who will buy nothing from the regular line.

A customer who wished to purchase some black-and-white shepherd's check remarked to the salesman in the dress-goods section: "These checks look like the pieces on the bargain table over there. Are they the same thing?" He replied, "I really do not know; I have n't looked at the table." The customer felt uncertain about the value of the goods and took samples only, eventually making the purchase in another store.

There is much need of coöperation between salespeople selling the same or nearly the same merchandise, as in the instance just cited, and also between those whose goods supplement each other. For example, when a customer buys a fountain pen he usually needs to get fountain-pen ink for filling it, but the ink is often sold in a different section by another person. Under these circumstances a conversation somewhat after this fashion frequently takes place:

CUSTOMER (about to leave, having just received his purchase). Oh, I want some ink to go with this. What is the best kind?

SALESPERSON. You'll have to ask the other girl about that.

CUSTOMER. Can't you sell it to me?

SALESPERSON. No; that girl down there is in charge of the ink.

Half a dozen weak points in the salesmanship exhibited in this brief dialogue will readily be discerned. Salespeople should eagerly avail themselves of opportunities to play into each other's hands and should transfer customers so pleasantly and promptly that the change will be hardly realized. In nearly all departments such opportunities exist. There are fabric gloves and kid gloves; sterling silver and plated silver; black silks and colored silks; tin ware and enameled ware; domestic rugs and imported rugs. Coöperation between the members of a department and between related departments is not merely a matter of helping each other; it has a more important bearing in insuring good service to customers.

Indifferent, uncoöperative workers are sometimes not sufficiently alive to respond to a suggestion presented by a *customer*, as in the case of one who, in an upholstery department, wished to look at a certain kind of silk for curtains. Before the slow-motioned saleswoman showed anything, the customer's eye was caught by an unusual couch cover, only one corner of which was visible as it lay folded on the counter. Apparently annoyed by the slight delay, the saleswoman said unsmilingly, "Did you want to look at silks?"

"Yes, I do," the customer responded, "but I am simply fascinated by this Persian couch cover."

Reluctantly moving away from the embroidered cover, the customer selected and bought the silk. While it was being wrapped at the cashier's desk, she glanced again in the

direction of the admired cloth. "The colors are beautiful," she murmured. The saleswoman made no comment, did not even unfold the cover, and the customer passed out of the department.

**Futile questioning.** Success in suggestive selling is dependent to a great extent upon power to stimulate a customer's imagination. It is therefore the *merchandise*—its usefulness, beauty, novelty, comfort—which should be brought forward rather than the idea of buying an additional but indefinite something. Salespeople seldom accomplish anything when they strive to augment their sales by inquiring :

1. Is that all?
2. Is there anything else?
3. What else?
4. You did n't want anything else, did you?
5. What else can you think of?
6. Was there something else, now?
7. Nothing else, was there?

When thus questioned, customers usually answer "No"; sometimes they reply absent-mindedly, "Well, I think I did want something else, but I can't remember what it was"; seldom do they buy anything more unless they had intended to anyway, irrespective of any questioning.

**Substitution a form of suggestion.** The principle of *substitution* is, in reality, the application of suggestion to a situation in which a customer fails to find the precise thing which is sought. Advertisers of well-known products often make the statement that there is nothing "just as good," and warn the public "to accept no substitutes." There is no doubt that substitution may be and has often been carried

too far ; but, on the other hand, good service demands that an effort be made to satisfy a disappointed customer, who alone can decide whether or not the proffered substitute will be acceptable.

**Presenting new ideas.** New ideas, even when well supported, are slow of adoption. Higher education for women was considered an unwise if not a dangerous innovation back in the sixties ; and not long ago a brand-new type of education embodied in home-economics courses had to make its way against the opposition of many who believed that no departure from the more strictly cultural form of education should be permitted.

Like this tenacity to old and accustomed habits of thought is the persistence with which some people cling to what they "have always had." They seem to dislike and sometimes even to resent a change to something different. Yet since manufacturers are constantly improving their output and are placing on the market new things which it is advantageous to try, it is reasonable to assume that a customer who asks for an old-fashioned article or for something which has been superseded and greatly improved in the course of years may be induced to consider a substitute if it is properly presented. But such a person will probably be disinclined to accept the new and untried article unless it is explained. As at the close of the sale it is usually futile to ask, "Is there anything else?" so, when the article called for is not in stock, it is unwise to inquire, "Would anything else do?" or "Would you like to see anything else?" If the nearest approach to the customer's demand is shown with a courteous explanation, it will often prove to be satisfactory.

A saleswoman reports this experience as an illustration of the practicability of substitution :

An excited customer came into the sweater department, sat down, and said, "I want a sweater ; it must be short, handmade, and by no means fancy." Here was a problem, for most of our handmade sweaters were of a fancy weave and nearly all were long. I showed her the plainest short sweater we had, but she did not like it. "Is that all you have?" she inquired. Although it was the only short, handmade sweater we had, I did not say so but brought one a little longer with a belt. Then I showed one still longer, with a shawl collar, and finally induced her to try on a long sweater with a very pretty blue collar. It was becoming to her, and she was pleased with it. "That is beautiful," she said ; "I will take it." When she left she thanked me and said I had sold her something she had not supposed she would care for, but that her mind was changed, and she knew she would always like what she had bought.

There is, perhaps, no such thing as a fixed idea.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. If you suggest and show goods to a customer who does not buy, how may your efforts yet be productive of good?
2. Describe the circumstances of a purchase which was first suggested by a window display.
3. Why might it be advantageous to buy an extra quantity of the following items?

Laundry soap

Material for a little boy's suit

Buttons for shirts

Christmas cards

Films for a kodak

Yarn for a sweater

Shoe strings

Shot for a rifle

Links for automobile chains

4. Give an illustration from your own experience, if possible, of something which was purchased as a result of a salesperson's suggestion.

5. Why is it unethical to force merchandise on an unwilling or hesitant customer?

6. Why is it poor business to do so?

7. If you were selling any one of the items given below, what merchandise carried in the *department* might you suggest as a logical additional purchase? Mention two or more things in each case.

Shoes

Men's neckties

Thread

Stationery

Sheet music

Baseballs

Lace curtains

Toilet soap

Paint

8. What *related* merchandise (sold in another department) might be suggested in connection with the sale of the following items:

A doll carriage

Skates

An evening gown

A smoking-jacket

Christmas-tree decorations

A typewriter

A coffee percolator

A hat

A traveling bag

Garden seeds

9. How can you learn enough about related lines of merchandise to suggest them intelligently?

10. Why is it desirable to refer a customer to a particular salesperson (whom you know to be efficient) in another department? Give three reasons.

11. Discuss all the points of good salesmanship brought out in the sale of the wedding veil.

12. At the end of this sale what articles might have been suggested to the parents as having been possibly overlooked by the daughter?

13. Why does a buyer sometimes place lots of the same merchandise on sale in several different parts of a store?

14. Rewrite the dialogue between the customer and the girl who sold the fountain pen, presenting an example of *good* salesmanship. Give reasons for the chief points in your revision.

15. What is meant by *esprit de corps*? Show how a salesperson imbued with this spirit may (1) strengthen his own department and (2) strengthen the store.

16. Give an instance from your own experience, if possible, in which a substitution proved so satisfactory that the article originally asked for was no longer desired.

17. How, without giving offense, can you persuade a customer to substitute a new and becoming style of suit for the old-fashioned, unbecoming type she has always worn?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. A lady and her two children are to spend the summer at the seashore. She comes to you to buy a bathing-suit for herself and for each of the children, a girl of five and a boy of nine. The children are with her. In the form of a dialogue write a full account of the sale as you would endeavor to conduct it, making liberal use of suggestion. At the end of your paper give a brief description of all the articles sold, with their prices. Merchandise actually seen in the stores should be described, as far as possible.

2. What arguments may be advanced in favor of aluminum kitchen-ware as a substitute for tin or enamel? Make a careful, written analysis.

3. Imagine yourself a clerk in a grocery store. Make a list of the foodstuffs you would advise a party of four men to take on a two weeks' fishing expedition.

4. If you were a clerk in a drug store, what would you suggest for a first-aid kit for this same party?

## CHAPTER X

### EXCHANGES

**History of the exchange policy.** As stated in the first chapter, Mr. Wanamaker was the first merchant in the United States to establish and put into practice the principle of allowing customers to return merchandise with which they are not satisfied and of granting a refund of the original purchase price. Mr. Wanamaker's announcement of this policy, made in 1865, was worded thus :

Any article that does not fit well, is not the proper color or quality, does not please the folks at home, or for any other reason is not perfectly satisfactory should be brought back at once, and if it is returned as purchased, within ten days, we will refund the money. It is our intention always to give value for value in every sale we make, and those who are not pleased with what they buy do us a positive favor to return the goods and get the money back.<sup>1</sup>

The notice caused a sensation. Many asserted that business could not be profitably conducted on such a basis of privilege ; but Mr. Wanamaker contended that customers were not receiving privileges, but were being accorded rights by this policy, which, he declared, operated as advantageously to the store as to the customers. On this point he said :

<sup>1</sup> This announcement and Mr. Wanamaker's explanation are quoted from the "Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores," which may be consulted for a more complete history of the exchange policy and for other interesting material relative to this subject.



Besides balancing benefits between the merchant and his customers, it automatically served notice on the manufacturer that the standard of his product must be so raised and maintained as to leave no room for complaint about quality. No merchant could afford to patronize a mill or factory whose goods were constantly being turned back on his hands. The salesman was freed from all temptation to misrepresent goods, because they would come back if they proved to be deficient.

**Abuse of a privilege.**<sup>1</sup> As time went on and the Wanamaker business flourished, its competitors adopted some of its policies, which spread also to other cities, until at length the return of merchandise for exchange or credit became a universal practice among the department stores of the country. However, as a result of competition, merchants became so liberal in their exchange policy that unscrupulous customers grossly abused the privilege, returning goods which they had injured or had worn or, as in the case of favors or table decorations, had "borrowed" for special occasions.

<sup>1</sup> A few authentic examples of unjust claims made by customers may help to show why curtailment of privilege has become necessary:

A customer purchased children's clothing to the amount of \$50, stating at the time of purchase that the child for whom the clothes were bought was ill and could not be brought to the city. A few days later the buyer of the department saw a notice of the child's death from scarlet fever. About a week after this a box containing the original \$50 worth of clothing was returned to the store for credit. The buyer accepted the merchandise, but carried it at once to the engine room, where it was burned.

A customer brought in her child wearing a hat which she wanted exchanged. She said this was their first visit downtown since the quarantine for scarlet fever had been lifted. The child had been the patient.

An undersized woman bought a \$60 suit which had to be nearly made all over for her. The skirt was shortened six inches, some fullness was taken out, the coat was all done over. About a week later the customer was indignant because the store refused to refund the \$60 plus the alteration charges. She said her husband did not like the suit, and she could not wear it in his presence.

Customers sometimes demanded and received full credit for merchandise which had been in their possession for months or even a year or more. During this time it had, of course, depreciated in value and, in some cases, had become unsalable. The most unreasonable claims were granted, for the stores acted on the principle that the "customer is always right" and took the stand that it is better to lose money on merchandise than to offend and lose customers.

Since such practices inevitably increase the cost of merchandise to the entire buying public, placing an undue burden on fair-minded customers, most stores have set certain limits to the return privilege. It will be noted that in his original announcement concerning returned merchandise Mr. Wana-maker imposed two conditions :

1. The merchandise was to be in as good condition as when purchased.
2. It was to be returned within ten days.

Time has proved the wisdom of these restrictions, which, with variations, have been included in the regulations drawn up recently by the Chambers of Commerce of many large cities.

When collective action such as this is taken by a Chamber of Commerce or a Retail Board, the public is notified sometime in advance of the impending change through announcements in the daily papers. The notification to the public sent out by the Chamber of Commerce of Cleveland in November, 1915, is given in full, because it is comprehensive and, in spirit and content, is representative of the new rulings of many merchant organizations.

## REGARDING RETURNED GOODS

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RETAIL MERCHANTS BOARD OF  
THE CLEVELAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The recommendations of the Retail Merchants Board, regulating the acceptance of returned goods, have been approved by the Cleveland merchants.

They ask the buying public of Cleveland to help them put the following recommendations into effect:

I. NONRETURNABLE ARTICLES. The following articles for legal, sanitary, or other reasons cannot be accepted for return:

1. Bedding and mattresses.
2. Garments that have been altered for the purchaser.
3. Shoes which have been altered.
4. Combs, hair brushes, and toothbrushes.
5. Hair goods and hair ornaments.
6. Rubber-goods sundries.
7. Women's hats which have been made specially to the customer's order.
8. All goods cut from the piece at the request of the customer.
9. All merchandise which has been made to order or specially ordered and which is not carried regularly in stock.

II. RETURNABLE ARTICLES. Any article of merchandise which for some good reason is to be returned to a store must be returned within a reasonable time — *two business days*.<sup>1</sup>

## III. CONDITION; SALES CHECKS

1. No article will be accepted for return unless it is in its original condition and boxing.
2. No merchandise of any kind which has been used will be accepted for return.
3. The sales check must accompany all returned merchandise.

<sup>1</sup> The time limit varies in different cities from a minimum of two days to a maximum of two weeks. Indianapolis allows three business days; San Francisco, four; Boston, six (though one Boston store in the spring of 1917 set a two-day limit for the return of trimmed hats).

#### IV. GIFTS

1. Gifts of all kinds (Christmas, wedding, birthday, etc.) if returned will be accepted only in exchange for other merchandise and will not be credited on the account of the person receiving the gift.

2. Gifts may be returned for exchange at current prices only.

V. UNJUST DEMANDS. The names of all customers who continually make unjust claims upon the merchants and of customers who return C.O.D. merchandise will be reported to a central clearing house. Such information will eventually become a part of the credit information supplied every merchant.

VI. DEPOSITS ON "WILL CALL" PURCHASES. A deposit of not less than 25 per cent of the purchase price will be required on all "will call" purchases.

VII. NONRETURNABLE TAGS. Uniform tags will be supplied for use on articles bought with the privilege of return. If these tags have been removed from an article it will not be accepted for return.

Any article bought with the privilege of return will be considered sold and not returnable if the merchant is not advised within two business days that it is to be returned.

Please cooperate in a reform which will be a benefit in every way to everyone in this community.

The recommendations were signed by fifteen firms.

**Advantages of the exchange policy.** The fact that the exchange policy has stood the test of more than fifty years in practice is sufficient evidence of its soundness. It operates ideally when intelligent salespeople and reasonable customers come together, and even under less favorable circumstances its advantages are believed to outweigh its disadvantages. In this policy customers have a guaranty of satisfaction which tends to make them buy more freely since, except in the case of special sales and a few nonreturnable lines of goods, no sale need be final. They may also shop almost

unrestrictedly on approval, a privilege especially appreciated by those who prefer to try on garments comfortably at home or who wish to try the effect of an article in the house before making a decision. To the store the chief advantage lies in the fact that any misstatement, misrepresentation, or lack of reliability in service or merchandise is almost sure to be reported and investigated, with the result that buyers and salespeople are on guard to prevent dissatisfaction. In this way the policy helps to establish a firm's reputation for liberality and fair dealing.

**Disadvantages of the exchange policy.** The main disadvantages of this system are (1) injury to the stock, which, when returned, may have to be marked down as a result of handling and packing; (2) the expense involved in delivering goods which may not be finally sold; (3) the expense of collecting and transporting returned goods; (4) possible loss of customers for merchandise which is out subject to exchange.

While it is inevitable that some merchandise be returned for exchange or credit, the percentage of such returns is abnormally high in some departments because of poor salesmanship. It is much less trouble to suggest that a customer take something home and try it because "you can return it if you don't like it" than to discover the real need and endeavor in every way to satisfy it while the customer is in the store. Another unfortunate tendency of unintelligent salespeople is to encourage a customer to have several articles sent home for leisurely consideration when the purchaser might easily be led to make a decision on the spot. White skirts may be taken as an example. Let us suppose that a customer who has decided to lay in a supply for summer wear, finds more styles and more kinds of materials than she

has known about. There seems to be a great range of price, also. She tries on some skirts over her wool suit, but the effect is not entirely good, and it is difficult to tell about the size. The saleswoman has brought out quantities of stock but has been of mechanical assistance only. Perceiving that the customer appears to be in a hurry and that a decision is not being reached, the saleswoman suggests sending out a half-dozen styles, a proposal to which the customer hastily assents, hoping that in this way she may find something that will do and that her time in the store will not have been utterly wasted. Many such cases occur, and they are often entirely unnecessary.

**Checking excessive use of the return privilege.** Some stores have put a check on the wholesale practice of sending on approval by limiting the number of pieces which may be sent, setting the number as low as three, or even two, in certain departments. This has proved to be a wise prohibition, because it enables a store to serve the great majority of its patrons more satisfactorily than is possible when a large proportion of unsold merchandise is out of the store. It also strengthens and stimulates the efforts of the weaker salespeople. There are other methods designed for weak or insatiate *customers*. Section V in the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce announcement shows that undesirable customers are watched and are not indulged indefinitely in their unreasonable claims. A courteous letter of inquiry is sometimes sent to such customers, urging them to report any failure on the part of the store in respect to service, merchandise, policy, or system which might account for the excessive amount of merchandise returned. The intimation is that unless the store is at fault it may be advisable to

close the account of the person addressed, as business done on such a fluctuating basis is unsatisfactory to the patron and unprofitable to the store.

It is evident that an over-liberal policy may have a demoralizing effect. In the course of a century the pendulum of trade has swung far in two directions. In the earlier period of storekeeping, before Mr. Stewart and others had established their high principles of business procedure, many merchants took every possible advantage of customers. Now, in our time, the situation has been reversed ; some customers have imposed upon merchants. Both extremes are illogical, uneconomic, and unethical. It is to be hoped that the era of sane, reasonable, honest trading which we are now entering will be permanent.

**The salesmanship of exchanges.** The attitude of salespeople toward customers who wish to make an exchange or obtain a refund is often criticized. Any salesman would naturally prefer to make a regular new sale than go to the trouble of exchanging an article or of having a credit or refund slip made out. But individual preference is not the point of emphasis. So long as the policy of the store allows the return of merchandise, the conscientious and courteous handling of such a transaction is as much a part of a salesman's duty as the first-hand sale of goods. Customers are embarrassed and offended when salespeople appear to resent being asked to make an exchange or to take back goods. It is ill-bred, selfish, and shortsighted to meet legitimate requests of this sort in an unwilling spirit. Aside from the human aspect of the question, which should prompt a salesman to think of himself in the customer's place, there is always the possibility that a request for a refund if well

handled may be converted into an exchange or that a new sale may be developed along a new line. Both refunds and exchanges offer excellent opportunities for the exercise of good salesmanship.

A customer, accompanied by her daughter, entered a silk department. Both were much attracted by a piece of silk displayed on the counter.

"I like this piece so much better than the one I bought yesterday," said the customer to the salesman.

"We will exchange it for you, madam, if you wish, but the piece you bought is much the smarter of the two," he replied.

The customer's doubts would have been settled by this if her daughter had not so greatly admired the piece which they were both seeing for the first time. The salesman again remarked that if the customer would bring in the silk bought the day before, they would be glad to exchange it, but that if style were any consideration the original purchase could not be equaled in the department. After a good deal of thought and discussion the customer finally said, "Well, I will take seven yards of this for my daughter and will keep for myself the silk I bought yesterday."

Six linen handkerchiefs at  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents each were returned by a customer with the explanation that she did not need them and wished a refund. The salesgirl saw at once that the handkerchiefs were of a better grade than the store was then carrying at that price, so she told the customer, as a matter of interest, that owing to war conditions the same handkerchief had advanced to 15 cents. The customer had been unaware of the linen shortage and was so impressed by the advancing prices and the probable disappearance of linen from the market that (although she said she had a good supply of handkerchiefs on hand) she not only kept the six she had intended to return but bought an extra dozen at 15 cents each.



A young girl bought a \$30 coat and seemed entirely satisfied with it, but as her mother was not pleased with it, the coat was taken back to the store by the mother and daughter and a credit asked for. The mother explained that she disliked the color and thought the price too high. She allowed the salesman to show the \$25 coats, which were the next lower in price, but these were not satisfactory. The salesman thought to himself: "They are going to buy a coat somewhere. The daughter is easily pleased; I am going to win the mother." Removing from sight the coats not admired, he showed some \$35 models, bringing out all the good points regarding the material, the lining, and the style. The mother finally said that she thought the \$35 coats were worth the difference in price, and selected one for her daughter. She then asked the salesman to show her something for herself. To his great surprise she soon decided on a coat at \$40.

In practically all stores certain merchandise is not returnable for hygienic or other reasons, and in most stores millinery is one of the restricted lines. There is usually somewhere in the department a sign similar to this one, observed in a New York store: "For the benefit of our customers millinery is not exchanged or credited." It sometimes happens, however, that a rule even so rigid as this is set aside for good and sufficient reasons; and when this is done no comment or criticism should be made by salespeople, who should give as good service to the exchange customer as to any other.

A lady who was a friend of a member of the firm in a certain store which carries only expensive merchandise was unwilling to buy a hat until her husband had seen and approved her selection. She explained the situation to the firm member and was authorized by him to have the hat she liked sent home on approval. As her husband was not pleased with it, she brought it back and was received most

unpleasantly in the department. Without waiting for explanation, the saleswoman pointed to a sign, saying "There is the sign about exchanges." Even after the circumstances had been explained and the exchange arranged for, the atmosphere remained hostile and uncompromising. After the saleswoman had remarked, "I should think you tried that hat on times enough to know whether it was becoming," and had tried on one or two others in a spiritless way, she said contemptuously, "Probably there are no hats here that you would like for the price you want to pay." The customer will never again attempt to buy a hat in that store.

**Charge accounts and credits.** It is a store's charge customers who make most extensive use of the exchange and credit privilege, because they are in a position to enjoy most fully the conveniences of this system. Cash customers are entitled to the same privileges, but since they are ordinarily obliged to visit the store in person for an exchange or refund (unless it is a case of an "even exchange," involving no new element or the handling of any money) they are more likely to make their purchases thoughtfully and with the expectation of having them final. Charge customers are put to no trouble in returning goods. The store's delivery wagon calls, and the credit is entered on the account. Nothing could be simpler for the patron. But there is sometimes trouble in store, for when the bills are received the credit is often found to be incorrectly entered. An entry of "under credit," a smaller amount than is due the customer, is usually accounted for in one of two ways :

1. The sales check and price tag having been removed by the customer, the salesman who makes out the credit slip trusts to his memory for the price instead of ascertaining it by comparison or by inquiring of an authority. The latter

method is usually the safer because of the possibility of a reduction in price since the article was purchased.

2. Price tags, when present, are sometimes marked so illegibly as to be incorrectly read.

Neither cause is sufficient excuse for errors, which are costly in respect to the labor involved in correcting them, in annoyance to customers, and in a store's lowered reputation for efficiency.

The personal element in exchanges may count even more than in ordinary sales. Some customers are timid about taking goods back to a store; others, annoyed because the merchandise was not right, are in a disagreeable mood; nearly all are sensitive if there seems to be any misunderstanding about price. People are almost invariably indignant if their credit is at all questioned. Some will not permit C.O.D.'s to be sent, because this method of payment may seem to reflect upon their financial standing. For these reasons diplomacy and patience are qualities needed by all who have anything to do with exchange customers.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. What rules regarding returned merchandise have been made by the stores of this city?
2. Name any stores which as yet have set no restrictions.
3. If different rules govern the return of goods in basement stores, explain the distinction and give the reasons for it.
4. What is the policy of 5-and-10-cent stores regarding exchanges and cash refunds? Account for it.
5. Why are goods not returnable when sold at reduction sales?
6. Explain why each of the nine items mentioned under the heading "Nonreturnable Articles" (in the Cleveland announcement) is on the restricted list.

7. Explain the two rules under IV ("Gifts").
8. What weak points in salesmanship are suggested in the hypothetical sale of white skirts?
9. What is the policy of two leading stores known to you in regard to the number of pieces which may be sent on approval from the fur-coat department? How many women's suits may be sent? men's suits? books?
10. Explain fully the undesirable features of exchange from the standpoint of the store; the customer; the salesperson.
11. Of what special advantage to a store are its cash customers?
12. Why do stores solicit charge accounts?
13. Make a list of the advantages enjoyed by charge customers.
14. Find out, if practicable, what proportion of the business of any one department store is represented by its charge accounts.
15. Some salespeople are inclined to give better service to charge customers than to cash customers. Why is this practice to be condemned?
16. Comment on this advice given a customer by a salesman in a high-grade shoe store: "You'd better open an account; you will get much better service."
17. Name any store or stores whose business is conducted on a cash basis.
18. Account for the fact that prices in cash stores tend to be lower than in other stores. Give at least two reasons.
19. What are "deposit accounts," sometimes carried by cash stores?
20. In what ways are deposit accounts of greater advantage to a store than ordinary charge accounts?
21. Describe any store of the "self-serve" type with which you are familiar. Give at least five factors which make low prices possible in these stores.
22. Printed on the sales check of nearly all stores is this statement: "In case of error or return of goods this slip must be presented." Give at least three reasons for this regulation.

23. Why is the rule not strictly enforced by many stores?
24. Do you think it should be enforced? Give reasons for your answer.
25. Who is responsible for marking price tags?
26. Who is responsible for attaching them to merchandise?
27. What is the salesperson's responsibility in regard to price tags on merchandise?
28. If the tags are missing from returned merchandise, what should the salesperson do?
29. What methods can you suggest for training your memory in respect to the prices of merchandise?
30. Why is it to your advantage to be sure of prices?
31. Make a list of ways in which an accurate memory may help you to advance.
32. Who, besides salespeople, have any contact with customers who return merchandise for credit or exchange? What contact do they have?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Taking as the subject of a debate the policy expressed in the dictum of some stores: "The customer is always right," outline fully the arguments on both sides of the question. From your own experience, that of your friends, that of salespeople in the stores, or from trade journals, get stories of exchanges to illustrate both sides of the argument.

In conclusion give your own opinion on the subject and the reasons on which it is based.

2. The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce announcement ends with this request:

"Please coöperate in a reform which will be a benefit in every way to everyone in this community.

Explain, in writing, how the reforms which are recommended would operate to the benefit of your community from the standpoint of (1) health and (2) economy.

## CHAPTER XI

### SERVICE

**Widespread expression of the service ideal.** Service as a practical working ideal is applied nowadays to many lines of endeavor. Perhaps no other principle, unless it be efficiency, has received so much emphasis in the last decade from able, earnest, thinking people. Animated by a desire to meet the real needs of the public, to serve the people better and more fully, many types of institutions have revised their methods with marked increase in vitality and effectiveness. The movement has found expression among churches in the organization of clubs and classes designed to bring people of common interests together in a pleasant and helpful relation; it has stimulated municipalities better to safeguard the interests and lives of the citizens and to make larger provision for their enjoyment; it has impelled universities to undertake widespread extension work whereby some of the advantages of higher education are made available to those who cannot go to college. A new profession, that of social service, is one of the most far-reaching manifestations of the great awakening which this movement for social betterment has brought to all the world. It is but natural that business, with its sensitiveness to every phase of current activity, should reflect the new spirit and that business men with characteristic energy, insight, and readiness to act should develop an expression of it on a basis of concrete usefulness.

**Competition on the basis of service.** There is another reason, besides concurrence in a popular movement, for the adoption of the service principle as a business policy. Every large city has two or three or several stores carrying practically the same grade of merchandise. Certain lines are likely to be duplicated, because buyers from different stores frequently visit the same markets. Moreover, buyers send out assistants, known as comparison shoppers, whose business it is to study and bring back information about the merchandise carried by other stores. Prices also are reported and any new ideas concerning displays or demonstrations which the observer is able to glean. Since the attracting power of *merchandise* has thus become more or less equalized among stores of the same class, a competition of *service* has developed, merchants now seeking to win and hold customers by offering them advantages in the form of certain comforts, conveniences, and opportunities free to all who enter the store, whether purchasers or not. In large stores these service features, as they are called, are developed on a large scale, patrons receiving, in many respects, as complete and courteous attention as is accorded by the finest hotels.

**Service features of stores.** The following is a list of some of the service features established by stores for the convenience of the public :

1. A service bureau whose activities include the purchase of theater, railroad, and steamship tickets ; calling messengers and cabs ; furnishing store guides and shopping assistants ; giving information of various kinds.

2. Writing and reading rooms equipped with stationery, magazines, newspapers of leading American cities, a dictionary, and directories of near-by towns.

3. A "silent room" where, in a darkened atmosphere, tired customers may rest.
4. A hospital with a trained nurse in attendance. (Emergency cases are often treated in the store.) A "coryza" room is sometimes provided for the treatment of head colds.
5. A nursery where children may be left in competent charge while mothers are shopping.
6. Wheeled chairs for the use of invalids.
7. Parcel-checking stations.
8. A branch of the public library.
9. Elevators.
10. Public telephones.
11. A post office.
12. Free delivery of purchases.
13. A telegraph and cable office.
14. A wireless station.

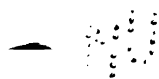
In some of the largest stores there is an auditorium in which concerts and other entertainments of a high order are given. Art exhibits are sometimes held. Restaurants, barber shops, shoe-polishing stands, manicuring and shampooing parlors are maintained for the convenience of the public, sometimes with little or no profit to the firm. It is manifest that one may spend an entire day in a store with pleasure and profit to one's self without buying a single piece of merchandise. Yet as advertising, as a means of attracting customers and of keeping people in the store, these hospitable arrangements are believed to be a good investment.

**Service rendered by the mail-order department.** A mail-order department is not ordinarily considered a service feature of a store, but such it unquestionably is to those who live in the country, too far from the stores to do their shopping





A PLAYROOM FOR CUSTOMERS' CHILDREN



personally. The letters which a firm receives from its out-of-town customers are given most careful attention by a force of workers whose time is devoted exclusively to this part of the business. Mail-order departments are expensive. Many times it is necessary to send merchandise on approval. Three or four coats may be shipped when it is expected that only one will be selected. Possibly all will be returned at the expense of the store. Customers often fail to make their meaning clear in letters and, consequently, the wrong goods may be sent. Heavy transportation charges, the expense of letter-writing and postage, and the cutting of many samples are other large items in the cost of such a department, which is sometimes so unprofitable that it is considered chiefly valuable as a means of advertising.

To show how painstakingly mail-order shoppers endeavor to serve their unknown customers, parts of two letters are quoted — one written by a customer living many miles distant from a large Western city, and the other the reply sent to her by the firm which she addressed. As a result of previous correspondence this customer had received some buttons which were not satisfactory. She wrote :

I am returning the buttons by parcel post as they are not exactly what I wanted. They are too heavy for the silk. Please send me something in a dark-green-and-gold cloth or braid button, one dozen large size and one dozen smaller size, light weight. Send the nearest you have or can get for me, by return mail, as I need the dress by Wednesday. Also please send me twelve small tassels of green and gold. You have \$1.40 to my credit, and I sent \$18.75, making \$20.15 in all. Your bill came to \$27.61. I am returning the buttons, \$2.05, leaving a balance due you of \$5.41, which I inclose. Please send bill with buttons.

The firm replied as follows :

Yours of the 26th instant received, and in reply we would state that we have nothing in green-and-gold buttons or tassels as ordered. We tried all the stores, endeavoring to procure the goods for you, but without success, so we had the tassels made to order and have selected some green crochet buttons in two sizes. Of the smaller size we can supply only eight. These are all we have of this shade in any size. Should the buttons meet with your approval, we would suggest that a touch of gold could be added by running gold thread through them. We are sending a spool of gold twist, which may be returned if not desired. We regret that we were unable to send your order for trimmings on the day it was received, but as the tassels had to be made to order, there was necessarily a delay of one day. We are sending the package by special delivery and trust it will reach you in due time.

Had this shopping been a commission from the wife of the proprietor, it could not have been more conscientiously or whole-heartedly done. Good work of this kind must have been what Mr. Eben Jordan, the founder of the firm of Jordan Marsh Company, had in mind when he expressed his business policy in the well-known maxim, "The better you serve your customers, the better you serve yourself."

**The service principle reflected in advertising.** The present trend in advertising, which features service and policy almost as much as merchandise, indicates a changed point of view in appealing to the public. Shortly before the opening of a well-known store a few years ago, this store's extensive advertising of service, with no mention of merchandise, attracted much attention. Two of these advertisements are quoted in part :

## I

The words "business courtesy" shall find here a new definition. They shall include more than formal deference or the mere politeness of policy. We are hosts; you, our guests. Everyone here shall serve you with a host's desire for your pleasure. Patience, time, expert advice, interest in your comfort, — all we have shall be yours, — impartial, inexhaustible, complete.

Not servility, but service. We do not wish our people to be obsequious. That attitude destroys self-respect, stands no test, defeats its purpose.

With allowances for human limitations and the occasional failures of fatigue, salespeople, drivers, the office force — all whom you see and those who serve unseen — extend to you "that politeness which has its seat in the heart."

They are proud of this store. Their courtesy is a welcome.

## II

## WHAT KIND OF STORE IS IT TO BE?

First of all, a *reliable* store. And this, so far as care and effort can achieve it, not alone in merchandise but in all other matters; in our advertising, of course; in our deliveries; in our service, generally; even in the little promises made by our people.

Next to that, a store of *good value*. Not a "bargain" store, in the ordinary use of that word, but a store in which a little money will go as far as it can go anywhere else — perhaps farther.

Third, a store of *courtesy* — a courtesy that is something more than mouth-deep; a courtesy that is due to all visitors, whether customers or not, whether large purchasers or small purchasers, whether apparently rich or apparently poor, whether or not themselves courteous.

Fourth, a *progressive* store, — eager to learn, quick to apply, constant in its desire to improve. Progressive too in its social as well as its mercantile efforts and duties.

All this has, of course, been said before. It is really a vague word-picture of the ideal of every merchant. Like most ideals, it is far easier to express than to achieve. What we have said in a paragraph or two, we have spent the larger part of our lives in trying to attain. But though we fall short of perfection, we shall continue to struggle for it and to grow toward it. Reliability, good values, courtesy, and progressiveness are not mere words to us. They are deep-rooted principles, and we found our business upon them.

Expression of a sincere desire to serve the public is found in a type of advertising which takes the form of a circular or letter sent to all the customers on a store's mailing list. Under the heading "A New Year's Letter to our 50,000 Customers," a firm sent this message to its patrons :

When we opened our large new store, nearly two years ago, the merchandise and service were improved in like proportion to the monumental new building.

We have received many expressions of appreciation, also helpful and valued suggestions and criticisms.

Our New Year's resolution is to make the — Company as nearly perfect as human hands and minds can make it.

To this end we are anxious to learn how our new store has served you.

Have your purchases been satisfactory?

Has our merchandise pleased you?

Have our salesmen always been courteous and efficient?

Has our service been remiss in any way whatsoever?

We want you to know of the many changes and improvements since the opening of the new store, to see and enjoy the enlarged and remodeled floor-covering and drapery

shops on the second floor; the new lines of merchandise, the art rooms, factories, and warerooms, all under this one roof.

We shall be glad to hear from you; to have any suggestions that may occur to you from your dealings with us.

**Salespeople the chief exponents of the service principle.**

Elaborate systems of personal service, announcements of coöperative policy, and breadth of view on the part of the management are fully effective only when supplemented and confirmed by a corresponding attitude on the part of the salespeople. To the great majority of customers a store is known and judged by the character of its employees rather than by that of its managers, and it is therefore of the utmost importance that the spirit and performance of all the workers shall be in harmony with the ideals of the firm. Many young people who take selling positions do not grasp the significance of the service principle; they fail to see the human opportunity in salesmanship; and some, it is to be regretted, are inclined to assume a personal instead of a professional attitude toward their work. A distinction exists somewhat like that between amateur and professional. An amateur photographer, for instance, takes pictures when he feels like it; he may select his subjects and may be genial, reserved, or crabbed with them, according to his mood or habit. Accountable to no one for his successes or failures, he responds to the prompting of his own spirit as to what he does and how he does it. Quite different is the situation of the professional photographer, who must endeavor to convert unsatisfactory subjects into promising ones and must work industriously all the time, placing the convenience and pleasure of his customers before his own.

A salesman bears the mark of an amateur when his attitude toward customers is governed by personal feeling rather than professional judgment. One who resolves to advance and become a leader must not attach too much importance to his own feelings ; he must take the world and its buffets philosophically, looking upon the difficulties of the work as merely a part of the discipline and training which bring that valued asset, experience. He will then view the "hard" customer not as an unpleasant individual to be pushed out of the store as soon as possible, but as presenting an opportunity for the study and mastery of higher salesmanship. It is the broad-minded, impersonal salesman who deals successfully with people who are arbitrary and peculiar, and these are the very customers who recognize and appreciate intelligent and sympathetic service. When satisfied, they are much more likely to become permanent patrons than persons who are easy-going and amiable.

Thus the ultimate interpretation of the service ideal rests with the salespeople, and their application of it to the daily store problems is a test of character and ability. Many are fully worthy of the responsibility placed upon them, and all will be when they learn to view their work without prejudice and are taught to appreciate its opportunities. That the service ideal works out successfully in practice anyone may prove by trying. It takes two to make a quarrel, and even the most uncompromising customers yield eventually in the face of persistent courtesy. A saleswoman contributes the following in illustration of this point :

I asked a customer who approached my counter if I could help her, and she answered irritably, "*No, no* ; I am only looking." Presently she picked up a waist. "That is



the latest style in chiffon waists," I said. At this she glanced at me not at all pleasantly, but I kept on talking about the waist and its good points. Finally she said, "I see it is a good waist, and that it is lined with silk muslin." I then told her how few of the waists were made with linings of silk muslin, a material which wears much better than the net more commonly used. All at once she became pleasant, declared she was satisfied with the waist, and would take it. As I was making out the sales check she said, "I did not mean to be so cross and undecided, but I live outside the city and am all tired out from looking around the stores." The waist I had sold her was not just what she had expected to buy, she told me, but it was both pretty and practical, and she was well pleased with it. When I gave her the parcel she said: "You have a great deal of patience, and I hope you do not have many customers like me. I shall come in to see you again," and she left with a smile that made her a different woman.

The appreciative friendliness of well-served customers is one of the most satisfying by-products of salesmanship. A lady took special pains to learn the name of a girl in the gown department of a certain store. "She did a favor for me, and that is so unusual, I shall always remember her," she explained. The girl had sewed on a button which was about to fall from the customer's coat. Another patron, who inquired the way to the waiting-room, was disappointed to find that she must take an elevator to a remote part of the store. "I merely want to address this package so that I can mail it on my way home to-night, and I hate to take the time to go way up there." The stock boy of whom she had inquired, knowing that pen and ink were obtainable at the buyer's desk on that same floor, suggested that the parcel might be directed there. As this solution seemed to be a great relief

to the customer, the boy accompanied her to the desk and addressed the bundle for her to save her the trouble of removing her gloves. It seemed a slight service to the boy, but not to the customer, who, as she left the department, said in the most grateful of tones, "I am *so* glad I found you." The incident brightened the day for both. Such attentions, requiring only a little thoughtfulness, may do more to win the support and goodwill of customers than all the expensive service features of a big establishment.

#### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Name two or more stores in this city which carry about the same grade of stock.
2. Make a list of all the service features offered by the stores in this city.
3. Give the location of these conveniences in one store, and state, with reasons, whether or not you think them well placed.
4. What features included in the list on pages 173 and 174 are not offered by any of your stores?
5. Relate actual instances, if possible, proving that service features increase the volume of business done by stores.
6. What special service is usually offered during the Christmas season in respect to boxes? wrapping and labeling bundles? souvenirs for children? entertainment for children? assistance for shoppers?
7. What is done to make the store more beautiful at this time?
8. Describe the most attractive store decoration which you observed last Christmas.
9. In what other ways may the Christmas spirit be expressed in a store?
10. What are the best points in the letter written by the Western firm to its out-of-town customer?

11. How may salespeople help to build up a store's mailing list?
12. Show that telephone shopping is a form of service to customers.
13. Describe the voice, tone, and manner which you think best suited to this service.
14. What would you say and do if a customer whom you were serving should criticize the service which he had just received in another department of the store?
15. How can you gain for yourself a reputation for giving excellent service?
16. How do stores express the service principle in their attitude toward and treatment of employees?
17. Of what personal benefit may it be to you to work in a large, progressive, well-organized store?
18. Name the principal colleges and universities of this state.
19. Describe any form of extension work carried on by any one of these institutions.
20. Describe one form of social service in which you are interested.
21. Name some well-known organizations for social service.

### ASSIGNMENTS

"Service is that which effects *genuine* economies for the customer and facilitates shopping."<sup>1</sup>

1. Write the above quotation in your notebook. Distinguish between false and genuine economies, referring specifically to certain poor and good "bargains," if possible.
2. Make a list of the ways in which a skillful and thoughtful salesperson may "facilitate shopping."

<sup>1</sup> From "The First Advertising Book," by Paul Terry Cherington.

3. Study the elevator service of one store and write a description of it, including the following points :

Express elevators, if any

Duties and personality of the starter

Methods and manners of elevator operators

Coöperation of the public

The impression made on you by this branch of store service

4. Send a mail order to a store for the following items :

A pair of shoes for yourself

Two pairs of gloves for yourself

A Standard Diary No. 35

Be sure to give all details needed for the satisfactory filling of the order. State method of payment.

5. As an assistant in the mail-order department, write a letter acknowledging the above order and stating what merchandise has been sent, on what date, and by what means of transportation. Explain that the store is temporarily out of No. 35 diaries, but that one will be procured and forwarded in a day or two.

Be careful to make both letters courteous in tone.

## CHAPTER XII

### CUSTOMERS

Consideration of the question of service in the preceding chapter brings our attention to the relation of salespeople to customers who, for one reason or another, require more than ordinarily thoughtful treatment. In this chapter certain types of customers often misunderstood or presenting special problems are outlined for class discussion. The experience and observation of members of the class will undoubtedly suggest others.

#### I. A SILENT CUSTOMER

A lack of response to the salesperson's advances is the chief difficulty presented by this type. People who say nothing when addressed and make no comment on the merchandise shown are not necessarily gloomy or resentful, although they may appear so. If such a customer remains in the department, it is safe to assume that a purchase will be made if the right thing can be found.

1. How may this uncommunicative attitude be accounted for?
2. What would be your attitude toward such a customer?
3. If nothing is said, how can you judge what merchandise to show?
4. How may such a person's confidence and liking be won?
5. Distinguish between moodiness and diffidence as a cause of unresponsiveness. How may each be counteracted?

6. Describe the most striking characteristics, the tastes, and the activities of any person of this type whom you may know.

## II. A CUSTOMER WHO IS "JUST LOOKING"

Customers of this class are nearly always women. Men do not spend their time in this way. There are three classes of this type :

A. Persons who do not expect to buy at the time of looking, and who, after examining the stock with more or less care, do not buy.

1. Have you done this yourself? If so, what was your purpose in looking about?
2. What do you think of the attitude which regards such persons as trespassers? Explain.
3. What would be *your* feeling toward such customers?
4. How do you like to be treated under similar circumstances?
5. What opportunity does this situation present?
6. What may be said to these customers as they leave?

B. Persons who will buy if they find just what they like.

1. Why do they assert that they are "just looking" when they know that they may buy?
2. If such a customer expressed a desire to look without assistance, what would be your policy, and why?
3. What dangers are there in leaving customers entirely by themselves?
4. How can you, without being obtrusive, help a person to look?

C. Persons who do not intend to buy but may do so if favorably impressed.

1. How may this attitude be indicated?
2. Explain in detail how you would try to develop a sale, under these conditions, to a person looking for a hat.

### III. AN EMPLOYEE OF THE STORE AS A CUSTOMER

1. Give the rules of any one store regarding employees' shopping within the store.
2. What is the discount usually allowed on employees' purchases?
3. Cite any instances of a more liberal discount allowance.
4. Why is the trade of its employees desired by a firm?
5. State three advantages to employees of shopping in their own store.
6. Account for the fact that as customers they are not always well served. What would be your attitude?
7. What courtesy is demanded of employees who appear as customers simultaneously with outside customers?
8. What is your opinion of the policy of allowing employees to charge against their wages goods bought in the store?

### IV. A TALKATIVE CUSTOMER

When a listener is supplied, some persons seem to take great pleasure in talking about themselves and their affairs.

1. Why must a salesperson be on guard against such customers?
2. How may excessive talking be discouraged without offense?
3. If the customer's mind seems to be more on outside matters than on the merchandise he has come to buy, how may he be led to concentrate his thoughts on the purchase?
4. If you know a person of this type, characterize that person briefly.
5. What do such people usually demand of others?
6. How should a salesperson respond to this demand?

### V. A CHILD SENT ON AN ERRAND

1. In what ways may unscrupulous salespeople impose upon a child?
  2. Why is it poor business (as well as unethical) to take advantage of a child's inexperience? Give three reasons.
-

3. How, through the child, may you stimulate the mother's interest in the store and the merchandise?

4. State as concisely as possible the principles of salesmanship which you consider most important in dealing with children as customers.

## VI. A CUSTOMER WHO IS A STRANGER IN THE CITY

1. Why is this an especially good opportunity?

2. How can you impress such a customer with your desire to be helpful?

3. Referring to the list of service features offered by the stores of this city, which ones would you take special pains to bring to the stranger's attention? Why?

4. Why should all directions be given with great care? with special courtesy?

5. In what ways are you likely to be able to make profitable use of suggestive selling?

6. Why is it very desirable to make a pleasant impression upon new residents? upon tourists? upon guests of residents?

## VII. A MAN CUSTOMER

A man shopping in a woman's department is usually an object of commiseration.

1. Why is this a hard situation for him?

2. How can it be made easier by the saleswoman?

3. State in general how men compare with women, as customers, in the following respects:

*a.* A tendency to make quick decisions.

*b.* A desire to look around and compare before purchasing.

*c.* Interest in bargains.

*d.* Liberality in spending.

*e.* Need of advice.



4. Why is slow or long-delayed service particularly annoying to men?
5. Is it justifiable to wait on a man out of turn?
6. Show that saleswomen who encourage personal attentions from men customers and who attempt to make a social occasion out of a business transaction have a mistaken attitude.
7. Why do dignity and self-possession in a saleswoman command the respect of men customers?

### VIII. A WOMAN WITH A YOUNG CHILD

1. What can be done to make the mother comfortable and rested?
2. If the baby, by crying or in some other way, interferes with the sale, what may be done to relieve the situation?
3. What entertainment or distraction may be provided for an older child?
4. Suppose a self-assertive child does not fancy a dress her mother has selected for her. How can the salesperson create harmony and make them both satisfied?
5. Why is it well to show an interest in customers' children?
6. What personal qualities are valuable in handling sales in which small children figure?

### IX. CUSTOMERS PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

#### A. Blind.

1. What sense is usually highly developed?
2. How may this facilitate the sale of merchandise?
3. What would the application of this sense reveal to a blind customer about *tucking*? *texture*? *embroidery*? *lace*?
4. Why should particular care be taken to show as nearly as possible the exact thing desired?
5. If the customer is unattended, what assistance might the store provide?

6. What can be done to help a person who is not blind, but extremely near-sighted, in the selection of merchandise?

*B. Deaf.*

1. Why is it that deaf persons are often supersensitive?
2. How can you guard against any offense to their feelings?
3. Why should you avoid very rapid speech when talking to a deaf person?
4. What is lip reading?
5. Of what importance is articulation in this connection?
6. What tone or quality of voice carries best?
7. If, in spite of your best endeavor, the customer does not understand you, what other means of communication may be used?
8. If the store is very noisy what would it be well to do, if practicable, to make the situation easier for the deaf customer?

*C. Invalid.* It should be remembered that an invalid is likely to be fatigued by exertion before actual shopping begins.

1. How may your manner express sympathy and helpfulness?
2. What quality of voice is likely to be most agreeable to one in delicate physical condition?
3. Why is it important to be cheerful in the presence of invalids?
4. In what ways are some stores prepared to give special service to invalids?

## X. A VERY STOUT WOMAN

Many articles of clothing are made in extra large sizes, called "out sizes," and some stores have established an extra-size department to meet the requirements of large women. Although such customers are now more easily fitted than was formerly possible, it is still often difficult to supply their needs in a satisfactory manner.

1. A large woman who wished to buy a suit was told, "We are all out of stouts." Criticize this reply.
2. What would you have said?
3. What quality enables people to state unwelcome facts in a gracious way? How may this quality be developed?
4. What kind of lines in a coat, suit, or dress make a stout woman appear to the best advantage?
5. Does she appear smaller in light or in dark colors?
6. Name a material which seems to decrease her size; one which has the effect of increasing it.
7. How can you help a customer of this type to be optimistic about her requirements?

#### XI. AN ELDERLY CUSTOMER

1. Why should the old be treated with respect?
2. What, besides respect, is due an elderly person from a younger one?
3. What selling points of merchandise are most likely to appeal to elderly customers?
4. What points usually require little emphasis?
5. What courteous and helpful attentions may be shown?
6. Why are elderly persons considered good customers?

#### XII. A FOREIGN CUSTOMER

It is not hard to be patient and friendly with foreigners if we stop to think how we should feel as customers in a foreign country, far from friends, lonely amid new surroundings, and unable to understand the conversation of the people all about us.

1. What countries are chiefly represented by the foreign element in this city?
2. If you do not understand the language spoken by a foreign customer, in what other ways may you possibly communicate?

3. What is an interpreter?
4. Name any stores that advertise the services of interpreters.
5. If the customer understands a little English, how may you help him by (1) choice of words; (2) slowness of utterance; (3) quality of voice.
6. How is *provincialism* shown by a person who laughs at the customs, appearance, and speech of foreigners?
7. Why do some foreign customers, especially Italians, take up time arguing over the price?

### XIII. A CUSTOMER WHO IS IN A GREAT HURRY

1. In what respects is this an easy type of customer? a difficult type?
2. What should be your foremost thought in serving such a customer?
3. Under what circumstances would it be permissible to wait on a hurried customer out of turn?
4. In what ways is it within your power to hasten the various details of the transaction?
5. What might be some unfortunate results of excessive haste on your part?

### XIV. A CUSTOMER WHO OFFERS A TIP

1. What is a tip?
2. Why is it offered?
3. Explain the prevalence of the tipping custom in Europe.
4. Why should this custom be discouraged in the United States?
5. Show why it is inadvisable to accept a tip from (1) your own personal standpoint; (2) that of the store; (3) of other customers.
6. How may a tip be declined without offense?
7. If it is forced upon you, what can you suggest as to the disposition of it?



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ITALIAN WOMEN IN THE STREETS OF NAPLES



8. Name any restaurants, hotels, stores, or public institutions which prohibit the acceptance of tips by their employees.
9. Suggest probable reasons for this prohibition.
10. Express your opinion of it.

#### XV. A CUSTOMER WHO OFFERS CANDY

1. State the rules of any one store regarding gum-chewing or the eating of any food.
2. Give two reasons why salespeople should not eat anything while on duty.
3. If a customer insists upon presenting you with eatables, what is it best to do with them?
4. Why is it inadvisable to place food of any kind in the boxes or drawers of a department?
5. Instead of taking surreptitious nibbles in the department, what should a salesperson do if he feels extremely hungry? Why?
6. Is it ordinarily necessary to eat between meals?
7. Why is it inadvisable, for most persons, to form such a habit?

#### XVI. TWO FRIENDS MEETING UNEXPECTEDLY

When this happens the friends' interest in each other is often stronger, for the time being, than interest in the merchandise.

1. How can you make your merchandise attractive enough to engage their attention?
2. If the customers are inclined to converse freely about their personal affairs, how can you present the points of your merchandise without seeming discourteous?
3. In what ways may the presence of a friend help a sale? How may it act as a hindrance?
4. If the friends differ about the merchandise, what will influence you in your efforts to consummate a sale?

## XVII. AN EARLY CUSTOMER

Two things are characteristic of customers who arrive soon after the opening of a store :

1. They nearly always have a definite purpose in coming, and they usually buy.
2. They are usually anxious to save time.

If it is true, as has recently been stated in print, that "the customer who tries to shop early gets no attention," it rests largely with the salespeople to correct this condition, which is ordinarily due to one of four causes :

1. Some salespeople are "off the floor," doing their own shopping or attending to other personal business. This means a reduced force.
2. Some are too much engaged in conversation with fellow-workers to notice the presence of customers.
3. Some are busy with stock work and are loath to stop and wait on customers.
4. Some are late in reaching their departments.

Think over these four causes for the early customer's dissatisfaction and consider who is responsible in each case and how the situation might be remedied. The next day you work in a store observe carefully all that occurs during the first half hour and be ready to report on it.

Why is it to the advantage of the customer, the store, and the salespeople that customers should shop early in the day during the holiday season ?

## XVIII. A LATE CUSTOMER

1. Why is it that customers who arrive near closing time often receive poor service ?
2. What advantages do you see in waiting upon customers who come at the last minute ?



3. Name some classes of workers whose hours necessitate their shopping late in the day.
4. If you have ever bought anything very near closing time, explain how you happened to do it at that late hour.
5. What is *your* attitude toward late customers?
6. What do you personally, as a customer, endeavor to do in regard to late-afternoon shopping?

### XIX. BARGAIN HUNTERS

Most salespeople think that bargains sell themselves, and accordingly make little or no effort when placed behind a bargain table.

1. What is your opinion on this point?
2. What are some of the questions usually asked by customers who frequent bargain sales?
3. How may salespeople obtain the information necessary for answering these questions?
4. In what respects are bargain hunters easy customers?
5. In what respects are they hard customers?
6. What kinds of valuable experience may be gained from selling at a bargain table?

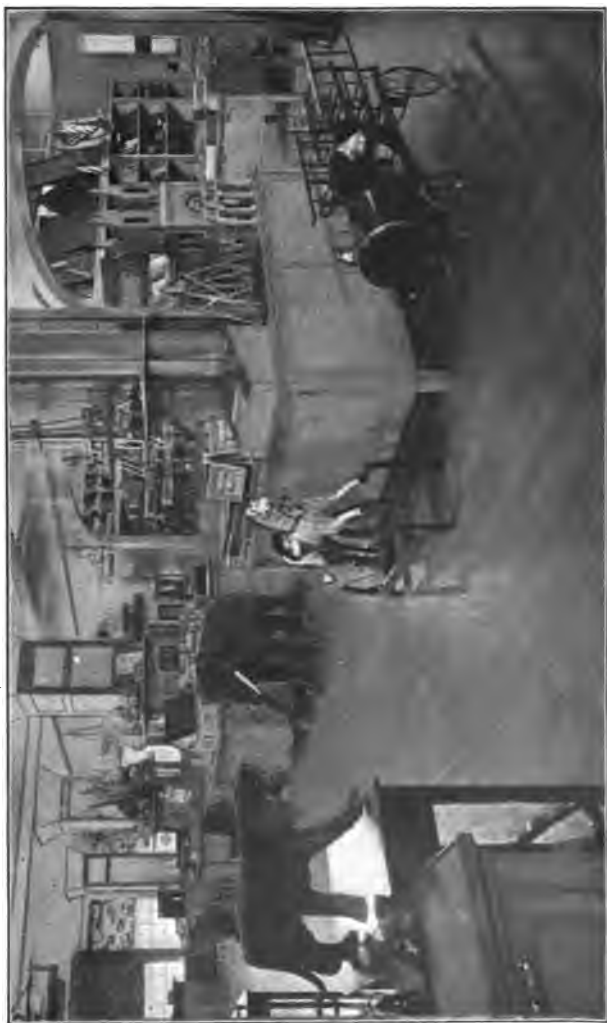
### XX. A TELEPHONE CUSTOMER

1. In answering a customer's telephone call, why is it better to give the name of the department than to say "Hello"?
2. Under what circumstances would it be advisable to give your own name in the first place?
3. In what ways may courtesy be shown over the telephone?
4. Give an example to show the difference between a courteous and a discourteous answer.
5. How can you make sure that you have taken a telephone order correctly?

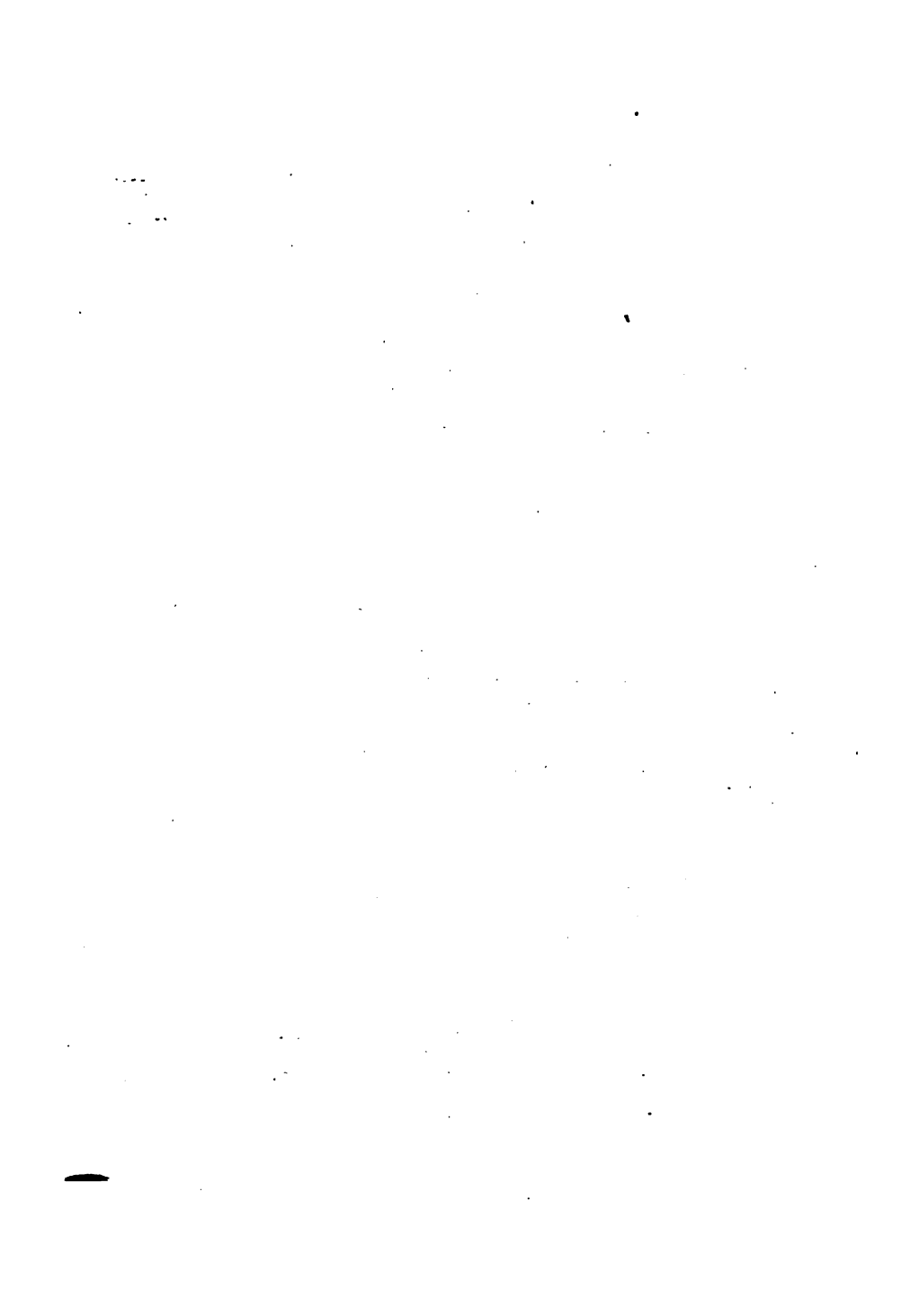
6. In what respects is a telephone customer at a disadvantage?
7. How may these disadvantages be lessened by the salesperson who answers?
8. In case of an unavoidable delay in responding to a customer's request, what should be done to show that he or she has not been forgotten?
9. If necessary to call someone else to the telephone, what precautions should be taken?
10. Why should the receiver be put back gently at the end of the conversation?
11. Discuss three important points in the salesmanship of telephone shopping.
12. Why is it considered an honor to be the one selected from a department to serve telephone customers?
13. Mention five ways in which consideration for the person at the other end of the line may be shown by users of the telephone.
14. How can you cooperate with the switchboard operator?
15. Explain fully what is meant by the hygienic use of the telephone.

## XXI. A PROVINCIAL CUSTOMER

1. Why is the country customer often ridiculed?
2. What is your opinion regarding such an attitude on the part of a salesperson?
3. In what ways are people who live in rural districts at a disadvantage?
4. What advantages do they enjoy?
5. Why are the farmers said to be "the backbone of the country"?
6. Why is rural trade accounted good business?
7. How may a salesperson cooperate with the mail-order department in regard to rural trade?



A DELIGHTFUL TOY DEPARTMENT  
The atmosphere is that of friendly, playful comradeship



**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Ask three persons of your acquaintance how they wish to be treated when they state that they are "only looking." Make a concise written report of their answers. Note in addition anything which is displeasing to them at such a time.

2. Visit children's departments in several stores.<sup>1</sup> Observe what provisions are made for the comfort and enjoyment of the children. Suggest additional attractions which might increase business.

3. Start a supplementary list of types of customers who seem to you especially difficult or interesting. After each heading state the leading thing to be kept in mind in that particular case.

4. Distinguish between tact and flattery, and give an example of each drawn from salesmanship. What is your opinion of the use of flattery as an auxiliary of salesmanship?

<sup>1</sup> Shoe, toy, and millinery departments are often distinctive. See illustration, page 201.

## CHAPTER XIII

### USE OF RESOURCES

Of the lessons of the Great War, perhaps none will prove to have been of more lasting benefit to the American people than that of conservation. Habits of wastefulness and extravagance had been characteristic of the nation as a whole in the prosperous years before the war, and a world crisis was apparently needed to bring us to a realization of our uneconomic practices. The exigencies of war taught the people of this country how to order their personal lives more simply, more unselfishly, and more efficiently. The work of the Food Administration alone did the nation incalculable good, and the interpretation and application of its slogan, "Eat plenty, but wisely and without waste," led to much-needed reforms in the daily provisioning of households the country over.

As every individual was affected more or less by the war, and as sacrifices involving adjustment to altered conditions were required of each one, so the great conflict brought every industry face to face with many problems, some old and some new, whose successful solution was largely dependent on the cooperative effort of the employees.

**Recommendations of the Commercial Economy Board.** Making the most of resources — a fundamental principle of good management at all times — is of supreme importance when excessive demand, resulting in shortage of materials,

sends prices soaring. During the summer of 1917, soon after the United States joined the Allies, a group of about one hundred representative merchants, constituting what was first known as the Commercial Economy Board and later as the Conservation Division of the War Industries Board, met in Washington to discuss measures for reducing waste in materials and equipment used in retail stores, for releasing labor, and for curtailing some expensive forms of service such as an unnecessary number of daily deliveries and too liberal allowance of time for return of goods. They appealed to the public to help eliminate waste and urged the adoption of certain economical practices. Their recommendations were as follows :

First, when shopping do not leave the store empty-handed. *Carry parcels with you* to the extent of your ability. Help to make this "the fashion."

Second, when you have goods to return do not leave home empty-handed. If all customers would carry small parcels for exchange, the saving of time in delivery departments would amount to thousands of hours annually.

Third, do not buy merchandise until you are sure you are going to keep it. Make careful selection a habit.

Fourth, avoid C. O. D. purchases whenever possible.

Fifth, shop early in the day, if possible. Stores must have a sufficient number of salespeople *all day long* to handle the trade at the very busiest hours, which, owing to the habits of customers, is near the middle of the day. To help distribute the business more evenly would result in great economy to us and, eventually, to you.

**Revision of store policies.** Chambers of Commerce and leading stores in all parts of the country gave these recommendations wide publicity, often setting forth in so-called

editorial comment the chief reasons for rousing public interest in these matters. Briefly stated, the reasons were these :

1. By reducing deliveries, men and equipment would be released for national service.
2. Savings effected by the means outlined would result in lower prices for merchandise.

The above and subsequent recommendations of the Commercial Economy Board helped to make a much-indulged shopping public more reasonable in their demands and led merchants to adopt new and decisive policies in regard to several important matters.

**Waste in stores.** Wrapping and packing supplies are ordinarily provided in such abundance in stores as to seem almost inexhaustible, and thoughtless workers are responsible for much waste in this direction. Many years ago an employee of A. T. Stewart said of that famous merchant :

He never spoke to me but twice. Once I tore a piece of wrapping paper roughly across, and he came around to tell me I should have folded it and made even edges. "People do not like to get shiftless-looking bundles," he said. Again, I wound a bundle around with an extra turn of string, and before I could cut it he had the bundle out of my hand and had unwound the unnecessary turn. "Never waste even a piece of string," he said ; "waste is always wrong."

Other common examples of waste are the following :

1. Forcing merchandise into too small an envelope, so that tearing results and a second envelope is used.
2. Using a large box when a smaller and cheaper one would accommodate the merchandise suitably.
3. Using tissue paper to pack inexpensive merchandise which needs no such protection.



4. Using tissue paper to protect sleeves. A store employing 750 women estimated that this practice cost the store \$300 a year.

5. Failure to save pins. In shirt-waist, underwear, and other departments where pins are used in quantities, spare moments may be well utilized in picking up the pins which drop to the floor. Good pins are expensive, and since they may be used indefinitely, it is important that they be saved.

6. Allowing pin-tickets, tags, and rubber bands to lie on the floor where they fall until removed with the waste.

7. Using more paste than necessary in applying address tickets to bundles.

8. Using tissue paper for dusting in place of cloth dusters.

9. Destroying boxes in which merchandise is returned when they are in proper condition to use again.

10. Destroying other boxes (especially empty merchandise cartons), which could be used to advantage in the packing-room instead of giving them to the porter for preservation.

11. Figuring and scribbling on printed forms instead of using the small plain slips provided for the purpose. Sometimes a corner of a sheet of wrapping paper is torn off for figuring.

12. Discarding carbon sheets for salesbooks when, by a reversing of position, they might be used as long again.

13. Letting newspapers get too mused, soiled, or torn to be fit for use in packing and wrapping bulky merchandise, such as furniture and crockery.

14. Inclosing several advertising leaflets (as many as eight or ten are sometimes found) when one to a package is the rule.

**Losses in yardage departments.** An investigation of yard-goods departments usually brings to light some wasteful methods in failure to protect bolts of cloth from dust, too strong light, and injurious contact of one kind and another. Sample giving is such an expensive practice that during the war it was practically discontinued as a free service in some

stores, and customers were charged for the small piece cut off for their convenience. Salespeople should be trained in the proper way to cut samples. Lack of exactness in measuring goods, leading to overmeasurement in most cases, may be responsible for heavy losses in yardage departments. In one store every piece of goods cut off by four salesmen for a period of seven days was remeasured as a test of the accuracy of these men, with the following results :

No. 1 made 164 sales averaging \$4.48 per sale. The loss from overmeasurement averaged  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents per sale.

No. 2 made 161 sales averaging \$3.21 per sale. Average loss from overmeasurement was 3 cents per sale.

No. 3 made 221 sales averaging \$4.82 per sale. Average loss from overmeasurement was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents per sale.

No. 4 made 191 sales averaging \$4.54 per sale. Average loss from overmeasurement was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents per sale.

**Care of store property.** There are always some employees who fail to feel any responsibility for the upkeep of their store. It would never occur to them to report an odor of escaping gas in the locker room or a leaking pipe or faucet in the lavatory or a door out of order as to hinge or latch. Conditions of this kind, although they may be under the observation of hundreds every day, are sometimes neglected for weeks, and when finally given attention require much more extensive treatment than would have been necessary if someone had taken the trouble to report them when first noticed. The life of expensive fixtures is shortened when they are handled roughly, and cases and woodwork are marred and scratched as they would never be if all employees felt the same respect for their employer's property that they do for their own. The rule-book of one store prescribes that

Any who find it necessary to stand upon the counters or other fixtures at any time must use pasteboard or some other protecting substance beneath their shoes, —

a rule which might well be applied elsewhere.

Electric power is wasted by the burning of lights in unoccupied rooms and by the lighting of show cases at times of day when artificial illumination is not needed.

**Expensive errors.** Errors in writing and handling sales checks are costly.

A customer bought four silk shirts, paid for them, and asked to have them sent. As the salesman wanted to wait on other customers, he hastily jotted down the address on a slip of paper, postponing the making out of the sales check until he should have more leisure. When the time came, however, he was unable to find the slip; but feeling sure that he remembered the address, he sent the merchandise to 68 Park Street, a boarding-house, instead of to the correct address, which was 68 Clark Street. The customer telephoned to the store three times, then called to make complaint in person. As it was impossible to recover the goods from the boarding-house, which was a large one, the store lost \$18 worth of merchandise and probably also the future trade of a good customer.

Two customers, one immediately after the other, made purchases in the glove department of a large store. The first customer bought three pairs of gloves and asked to have them sent, with a private package inclosed, to a Boston suburb. The second customer, who bought two pairs of gloves, wished them sent, with dress goods and other articles bought in the store, to an address in northern Vermont. The saleswoman unfortunately reversed the sales checks. The suburban customer, who was to sail for Europe the day after this transaction, could not wait for her merchandise

to be sent back from Vermont, and as she was unable to take the time to duplicate the articles, the store was obliged to send her by special messenger the money equivalent of her purchases. The Vermont customer had engaged a dress-maker for the day she had expected her goods to arrive and was greatly inconvenienced by their nonappearance.

Errors in writing out sales are serious because of the labor and expense involved in tracing and correcting them and because of annoyance to customers. On a single day in one store eight hundred errors were made on charge sales checks. During rush seasons, such as the week before Christmas, or on sale days, sales checks are sometimes passed in with *nothing* written on them.

**Waste of time.** Of the many ways of wasting time one of the most inexcusable is tardiness in arriving at the store in the morning and in returning from luncheon. Time lost in this way can never be satisfactorily made up, and unfortunately the late one, by absence, places an unfair burden of responsibility upon punctual workers. Much time is wasted too at soda fountains and lunch counters outside the regular luncheon periods.

**Saving on delivery.** One simple means of saving money for the store has to do with the delivery of bundles. Within a certain area, perhaps a ten-mile radius, most stores deliver all purchases free of charge. This legitimate form of service for many lines of merchandise is not warranted for all, for when an inexpensive article, or goods on which there is little profit, is sold and delivered, the expense of sending, which averages ten cents a parcel, becomes a disproportionate item, sometimes resulting in actual loss on the sale. This may often be avoided. If the merchandise is of such a

character that a person may suitably and conveniently carry it, he is often willing to do this, provided a suggestion to this effect is properly presented. The tendency of people to respond involuntarily to a suggestion is a matter of common experience. To illustrate: One or two persons in an audience begin to cough, and presently others are coughing; a teacher glances at the clock, and the majority of the class immediately look in that direction; an indirect reference to posture will cause any audience to straighten up and assume a more correct position. People are inclined to apply to themselves any idea presented, and unless this idea is repellent or unreasonable they are likely to act upon it. Thus in the case under consideration, when it is reasonable to assume that a customer will be willing to carry his parcel, a salesperson's polite inquiry, "Will you take this with you?" will elicit an affirmative answer in a surprisingly large number of instances; whereas, were the opposite idea presented by the question "Will you have this sent?" or "Do you wish this sent?" the customer would probably as readily acquiesce in that suggestion.

**Losses connected with merchandise.** In some cases salespeople are directly responsible for losses resulting from depreciation of stock, as when merchandise is injured as a result of poor stock-keeping, poor folding, or awkward or careless handling. Again, if merchandise is poorly (that is, unintelligently) sold it is usually brought back for credit, and may, in consequence, look so shopworn as to necessitate a markdown. The making of unnecessary alterations in ready-made clothing is another source of waste, for most alteration departments are operated at a loss. Therefore only such changes as are distinctly needed should be urged.

**Relation of selling energy to wages.** Few salespeople realize how failure to put their best effort into the performance of their work affects their own interests, more specifically, how it affects their earning power. Selling cost, by which is meant the wages paid to salespeople, is one of the largest items of the store budget and a heavy drain if the salespeople are not proficient. Wages are usually reckoned on a percentage basis according to the amount of money brought in by sales. To make this clear let us suppose that a drug department can afford to pay a salesman a wage equaling 5 per cent of his weekly sales. If it is found that his sales average \$180 a week, he will then receive a weekly wage equal to 5 per cent of \$180, or \$9. Should he succeed in bringing in more than \$180 a week, he would in some stores be paid a commission of 1 or 2 per cent on all sales made in excess of the \$180 quota; in others he might receive a commission of 1 per cent on the total sales; and in still others his stated salary might be increased. If, on the other hand, the quality of his work should deteriorate and he should repeatedly fall below the \$180 quota, he would no longer be worth \$9 a week to the store, for his selling cost would be greater than the department could carry with profit.

Wages paid to salespeople in a small-wares department are usually estimated on a higher percentage basis than that prevailing in most other departments, perhaps being equal to 8 or 10 per cent of their sales totals, for the stock being low-priced, the total receipts of this department are small in comparison with other departments. Coat, suit, and gown departments carrying high-priced merchandise pay only 3 or 4 per cent of sales totals in wages, with usually a commission on sales made in excess of the weekly quota. For

example, a saleswoman in a certain coat department receives \$12 a week, with the expectation, fully justified, that her sales will total at least \$300 a week. She receives 2 per cent commission on all sales in excess of this \$300 quota. In some stores salespeople receive a certain weekly wage plus a commission on *all* sales; \$8 or \$9 per week and 1 per cent of the total weekly sales is a common rate. The record of sales is not the only measure of ability nor the only factor in advancement, but it is of necessity a very important consideration, since the life of the business depends upon the sale of goods.<sup>1</sup> It is naturally not to be expected that every meeting of customer and salesperson will result in a sale; but every customer represents a *potential* sale, and the salesperson should see to it that no matter how brief the interview or how trifling the errand, his service is of that high order which admits of no *wasted opportunities*.

**Wages and waste.** In another way the problem of waste is tied up with the question of wages. If materials, time, equipment, and effort are wasted by a considerable number of the employees of a store, operating and selling expenses cannot fail to increase out of proportion to the income from the business. Then, as it becomes necessary to use more and more money for rehabilitation, there is less for the substantial wage increases which are characteristic of the policy of well-conducted stores. If there were no other reason, it

<sup>1</sup> A saleswoman in a Western store was receiving a salary of \$50 a month when a competing store offered her a position at \$65 a month. The firm by whom she was then employed offered her the same salary, \$65 a month, provided she kept her selling cost at the same rate that it had been, namely 5.7 per cent. She accepted the condition, and as a result of increased effort and new enthusiasm *reduced* her selling cost to 5.2 per cent. The firm, delighted with her excellent work, increased her salary to \$100 a month within a short time.

is plainly to the selfish interest of workers to make the fullest possible use of all the resources at their command. Such endeavor is likely to bring a double reward, — material gain in the form of financial recognition and a spiritual reward in a satisfying sense of work well done.

Mr. Stewart said, "Waste is always wrong," and so it is — wrong in relation to customers, to the firm, and to its perpetrators. It is not fair to customers to waste the store's resources, because such action, in increasing the cost of doing business, adds something to the price of merchandise. It is not fair to the firm, because in detecting and correcting error and waste they spend time, money, and energy which should be devoted to more constructive purposes. And finally, those who waste do themselves an injustice, for by a misdirection of effort they decrease their efficiency, reduce their earning power, and lower their self-respect.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Why do some stores decline C. O. D. sales of less than \$1?
2. What economical measures were introduced by stores in this city after the United States entered the war?
3. Report anything you read, heard, or observed in support of or against these measures.
4. Discuss different methods of wrapping bundles, giving the advantages and disadvantages of

Envelopes

Boxes

Paper and cord

Which is the most expensive method? the quickest? the one most commonly employed?

5. Name some kinds of merchandise usually inclosed in envelopes; in boxes; some kinds that are usually wrapped simply in paper.



6. Demonstrate the proper way to wrap a bundle. Make your own selection of merchandise and wrapping materials.

7. Demonstrate different kinds of knots.

8. How do you estimate the amount of cord needed around a bundle?

9. Name five varieties of merchandise which need no inner wrapping of tissue paper.

10. Name five varieties which do need such protection.

11. From the standpoint of appearance what do you think of tissue-paper protection for sleeves? Give reasons for your answer.

12. Why is cheesecloth more economical for dusting than tissue paper?

13. In what respects is it more satisfactory?

14. Why is it objectionable to tear off the corner of a sheet of wrapping paper for scribbling? Give two reasons.

15. Estimate the loss incurred in case of one inch over-measurement on one yard of goods at 75 cents a yard; at \$1.50; at \$2.25; at \$3.50; at \$4; at \$6.

16. What was the actual loss from overmeasurement of goods in each of the four cases reported on page 208? What was the total loss?

17. Why is it more economical to cut a sample from a strip set apart for that purpose than from the end of a bolt?

18. How should a pin-ticket be attached to a sample, and what should be written on it?

19. Cite cases in which a request for a free sample would probably not be granted by any store. Explain.

20. Why is it an imperative duty to give immediate notice of leaking gas?

21. If thirty employees are ten minutes late, what is the total number of hours lost?

22. If \$8.50 a week is the average wage paid to these late employees, and they are employed for an eight-hour day, what is the money value of the time lost?

23. If the same thing happened every day for a week, what would be the time and money loss?

24. Discuss this question: Under ordinary circumstances are employees justified in asking for a pass for the purpose of eating an extra luncheon in the morning or afternoon?

25. Give an example from your own experience illustrating the power of suggestion.

26. How may *energy* be wasted as a result of poor ventilation?

27. How can you help obtain good ventilation, and why should you feel responsible for doing your part in maintaining as good conditions as possible?

28. What should be the temperature of living rooms and workrooms?

29. What is the effect of an excessively hot, dry atmosphere?

30. What is the effect of a chilly, damp atmosphere?

31. Why is some moisture needed in the air?

32. How does an accumulation of rubbish behind a counter tend to decrease the efficiency of salespeople?

33. Mention three ways, aside from tardiness, in which salespeople may waste time.

34. Show how you yourself (or someone you have observed) waste time and strength in "lost motions" made in dressing; in the performance of some household task; in starting a day's work in the store.

35. Name and tell something of the life of a famous American who made a study of lost motions in industry.

36. What does conservation of bodily energy mean?

37. How can you apply this principle to yourself?

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Ask for a sample in two different stores. In one case, take something with you to match; in the other, ask for a sample of something you see on display. Attach each sample to a sheet of

theme paper and write concerning the following points in relation to each:

- a.* Salesmanship displayed in giving the sample.
  - b.* Selling points given.
  - c.* Impression made upon you by the salesperson.
  - d.* What you would have done differently, and why.
  - e.* Where the sample was cut off.
  - f.* Size of the sample: Is it unnecessarily large? Is it large enough?
  - g.* Kind of pin-ticket.
  - h.* Information on pin-ticket.
  - i.* Neatness and clearness of figures.
  - j.* Salesperson's identification mark.
  - k.* Summarize: In what ways does the sample reflect credit upon the store? In what ways does it reflect discredit?
2. In the stores in which you procure the samples, look about for evidences of waste of *materials, time, and energy*. Report your observations, in writing, under the three headings given.
3. Collect and mount samples of different kinds of twine. After each write the name of the fiber of which it is made and state for what use each is best adapted.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ADVERTISING

That a satisfied customer is the best advertisement is a truism which none will dispute, but few merchants think it best to rely wholly on this kind of advertising for growth in their business. The merchant who wishes to make his store, his merchandise, and his service widely known, and thereby gain a large clientele, makes use of advertising in a great variety of ways, the most far-reaching being the printed newspaper page.

**Old style of advertising.** Advertising in the daily papers has changed as radically in less than a century as have most other phases of business. In 1850 a merchant occasionally inserted three or four lines of type calling attention to the arrival of a new shipment of goods. This advertisement, which might appear without change for days or even weeks, occupied less than an inch in a single column, and in form resembled the concise notices under "Help Wanted" and "Positions Wanted" in our papers to-day. There were no pictures; no conspicuous type was used; there was no competitive striving after effect. A typical example of these simple announcements is the following from the *New York Tribune*, July 10, 1850:

COLORED CAMBRICS: 125 cases, light and dark assortments, from 4½ to 6 cents, for sale by C. B. LEBARON, 55 Pine Street.

Another, more interesting and revealing more play of imagination on the part of the writer, is this:

**TO THE LADIES:** Peter Roberts, 375 Broadway, has just opened a large assortment of Thread Laces, Capes, Dresses, Scarfs, Collars, Sleeves, etc., rich muslin Capes, Chemisettes, Collars, Cuffs, embroidered and other styles of Cambric Handkerchiefs, black Flouncing Laces (all widths), real Valencia Laces, from 1s. upward; Lace and Muslin curtains, Drapery Muslin, figured Swiss; plaid, stripe, and plain Muslins; Hosiery and Gloves.

P. S. The stock has been bought under the regular prices and will be sold at a small advance on the cost.

Rhymed advertisements were popular. Here is one:

To order, shirts we make without delay;  
Right measure take and every wish obey.  
Our pledge we give and warrant them to fit,  
Nor rest content if not the fancy's hit.

**Ethics of advertising.** Before honest, straightforward dealing became the rule in the conduct of business, advertising was so generally characterized by exaggeration and deceit that all announcements of this kind were discredited, and those who were responsible for their publication were regarded as humbugs. This distrust, so strongly entrenched during most of the last century, lingers even to-day in the minds of some persons who do not realize that every reputable store has adopted and maintains a standard of scrupulous honesty in advertising. Any other standard would be out of harmony with present-day policy as well as contrary to the laws of many of our states, in which a false statement as to "quantity, quality, method of production or manufacture, cost of production, cost to the advertiser, the present or former

price, or the reason for the price," is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine or imprisonment, or both. The advertising policy of a Boston store has been condensed into these words:

No exaggeration, no misleading statement, and no half-truth shall be made under any circumstances in connection with any of our publicity. Any statement of the truth of which we do not have absolute proof at the time it is to be printed will be excluded from our publicity.

Another store asserts that its "sole purpose [in advertising] is to be helpful to the store's customers in the selection of merchandise that will satisfy," and that "each piece of goods is advertised with the idea of building up business for the whole store instead of merely procuring the sale of one article." It states further that it aims to "*sell* goods but not to *push* goods on an unwilling public," and announces these two rules, always strictly followed:

A reason must always be given for a special price or extra quality.

If the article is a "second," it must be so represented.

**Good style in advertising.** Honesty and frankness are the firm foundation of good advertising, but these characteristics do not alone insure success. Study of advertisements in newspapers and magazines discloses great diversity in style, convincing quality, attracting power, and artistic value. For advertising has become an art. To hold attention and stimulate interest an advertisement should be well-designed, which means provision of adequate space for the material to be presented, a regard for the laws of balance and proportion in the arrangement of the copy, and a wise distribution of emphasis.

**G E M S**

LARGE ASSORTMENT  
OF DEPENDABLE

**DIAMONDS  
WATCHES  
AND  
JEWELRY**

FROM THE LOWEST  
TO  
THE BEST  
ON  
OUR FAMOUS TERMS

\$ 25.00	--- \$ 1.00 Weekly
\$ 50.00	--- \$ 1.00 Weekly
\$ 100.00	--- \$ 2.00 Weekly



**FURNITURE BARGAINS.**

Here Are Quality Goods of Character.

Our February markdown sale of period furniture for the Dining Room, Bed Room and Living Room. Low figures not only apply to the Day Beds illustrated, but to every article. Also floor coverings.

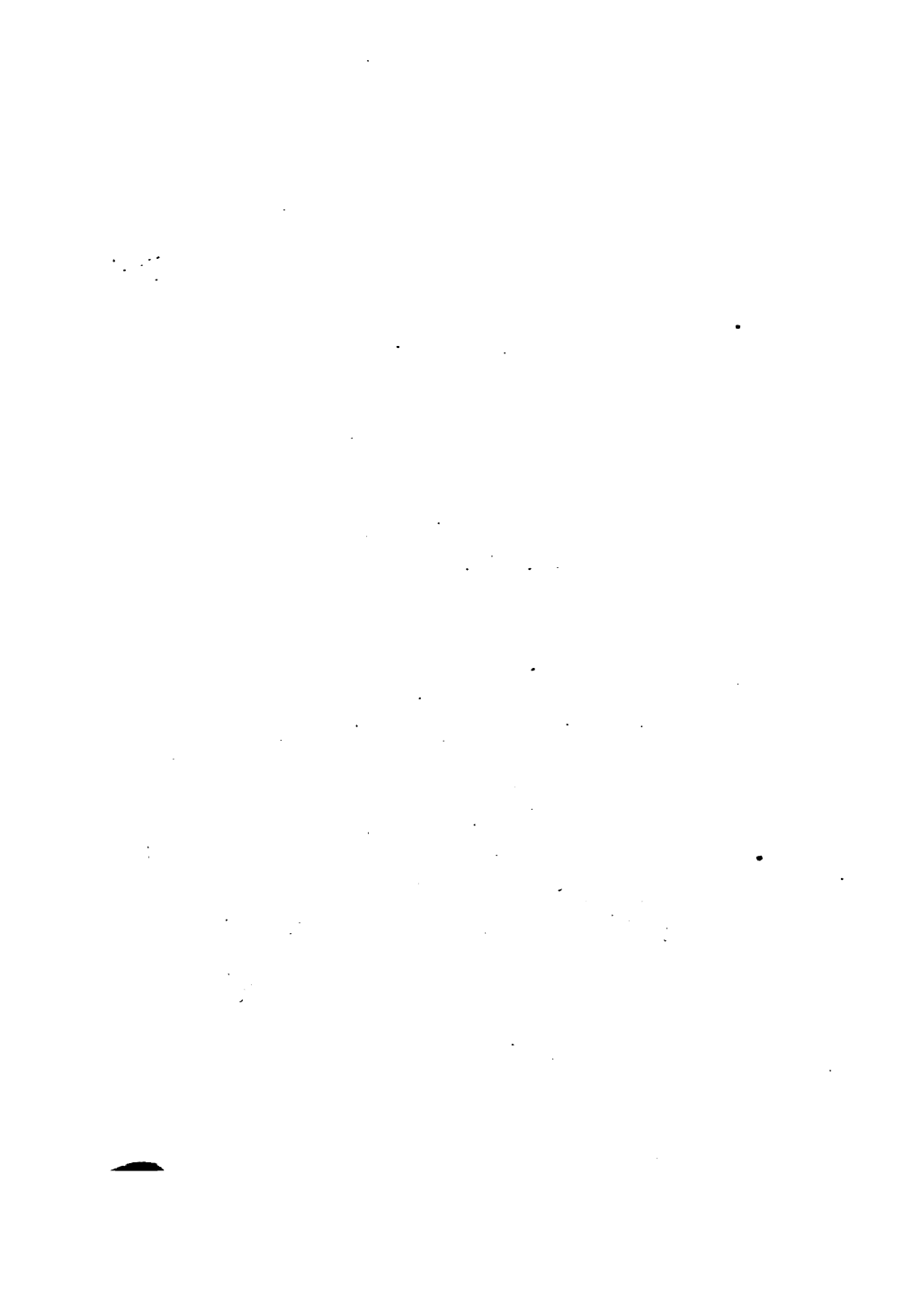


No. 2

No. 1

No. 3

POORLY DESIGNED ADVERTISEMENTS





If illustrations are used, they should be so treated as to heighten the effect of the advertisement in a logical and pleasing manner. In the lower illustration on page 221 the arrangement of beds, No. 1 and No. 2, is disturbing because it is illogical. The irregular numbering of the three pieces of furniture is another unpleasant feature.

The illustration at the top of page 221 is well-designed typographically, but the crowded, haphazard placing of the jewelry greatly mars the effect of the whole.

Literary merit of a certain kind should be present. Advertisements should be clearly, correctly, and concisely expressed in words which, conveying the exact meaning as closely as possible, will fire the reader's imagination. The style should have individuality and should be further characterized by a moderation and restraint which are the opposite of sensationalism. Some writers attach much importance to a tone of optimism, and nearly all strive to have their advertisements in good taste, but through ignorance of standards some fall lamentably short in this respect. The advertisement reproduced on page 229 exemplifies admirably many of the principles of good advertising.

The character of advertising in a daily paper is often influenced by the circulation of the paper, whether it is read chiefly by the less-educated portion of a community or only by the more intelligent citizens. The demand is different in the two cases, and, while the ethical standard remains the same, the form of appeal and the style may and usually do vary. It is in the design of the advertisement, the type, and the diction that this difference is most apparent. Compare the literary quality and tone of the following announcements, which appeared in papers reaching very different classes of readers:

## A

**OUR RECORD-BREAKING SALE**  
**HURRY!! NEARING FINAL END! HURRY!!**

**WINTER SUITS, COATS, AND DRESSES**

**COATS**

*Former values*  
**\$12.50 to \$18**

Your last opportunity to buy a coat at this price. Included in the lot are: Zibelines, Jerseys, Broadcloths, and Plaids; your choice at **\$4.95**

**PLUSH AND CLOTH COATS**

Just think of it—a Plush or Wool Velour Coat at only **\$9.95**—values from **\$15** to **\$29.50**; women's and misses' sizes—tomorrow we offer your choice at only **\$9.95**

**DRESSES**

Silk—Silk Poplins—Cloth—including Tafeta Silks, Crêpe de Chine, Satin, and Serges. Values **\$10** to **\$25**. Your choice, Monday only—**\$4.95**

## B

**MISSES' WINTER SUITS, COATS, AND DRESSES****REDUCED FOR CLEARANCE**

The styles are correct, and the fabrics and colors among the most fashionable

6 suits were \$35 to \$50 . . . . .	Now \$20
7 suits were \$39.50 . . . . .	Now \$39.50
29 coats were \$29.50 . . . . .	Now \$15.00
8 coats were \$35.00 . . . . .	Now \$19.50
14 velvet dresses were \$29.50 to \$45.00 . . .	Now \$18.50

**FASHIONABLE WINTER COATS FOR WOMEN****REDUCED FOR FINAL CLEARANCE**

Broken assortments of some of the most charming models shown this season. Some fur-trimmed, others with trimming of self material or plush.

Divided into three groups and reduced to

\$16.50	\$29.50	\$39.50
---------	---------	---------

**Editorial advertisements.** The editorial style of advertising is much used. This is typically, as its name suggests, a dignified presentation of a central idea. Frequently the

management makes use of the editorial for an announcement of business policy, as the following extract from the advertisement of a well-known store will serve to illustrate :

## C

*To set forth established facts only*

is the object of this page which, in excluding pretense and exaggeration and in making statements brief, may sometimes make them seem dull and dry.

Conducting such a business as we desire this to be must be done with candor, good sense, and probity for the sake of the public and of the employees, who are fixing the habits of their lives.

Much as we have done to give — a worthy store, it is still capable of improvement ; but with prodigious forces at our command we are able steadily to make progress in some directions all the time.

Or again, the editorial may take the form of a timely, more or less personal message, idealistic in tone, bringing out the spirit of a firm in the management of its business. Celebrations and anniversaries give just occasion for the expression of such sentiments, the following advertisement, which appeared on Lincoln's Birthday, being a good example of this type.

## D

**T**O-DAY, for a few minutes at least, we may profitably pause in the business in which we are engaged to give our thought to the great American citizen whose birthday is a national holiday — Abraham Lincoln.

He personified service without servility, gentleness without weakness, force without violence, courage without recklessness, caution without fear. He was, for his time and for the great duties laid upon him, the first American.

We men and women of to-day have no such responsibilities as his, but we have our own work to do and our own duties to perform, and we can acquit ourselves of these things in the same spirit as Lincoln's.

That is our aim and ideal for our business, as we hope it is yours in your work, whatever that may be.

An editorial advertisement may occupy regularly a certain space (as the upper left-hand corner in a half-page or quarter-page assignment); it may be placed conspicuously in the exact center of the allotted space or it may constitute the entire advertisement. The advertising of one store, which makes daily use of the editorial, sometimes gives the impression of a miniature newspaper, with foreign and domestic news (concerning merchandise) somewhat fully and elaborately set forth, and concise, pointed, "newsy" items of a miscellaneous nature arranged in a column. Here are three such items :

French batiste lingerie — made with all the accustomed Parisian delicacy of needlework, \$2 to \$75.

Apropos of the Book Sale, there are artistic oak bookracks, 6 by 13 inches, for 25 cents.

Self-weighing scales good up to 250 pounds, yet easily put out of sight in a closet or corner of the bathroom, \$10.

Book notices and reviews are sometimes included, making the analogy to the newspaper still closer.

**Explanation of special prices.** The policy of leading stores is tending more and more to the elimination of special or bargain sales, because it is felt that in the end

these "events" are opposed to the best interests of consumers. The papers are still filled, however, with announcements of sales which a satiated public is inclined to view with skepticism, there have been so many before, and the values have not always seemed exceptional. It is good advertising, therefore, to explain or justify a special price that customers may have faith in the merchandise placed on sale. A particularly interesting example of this type of advertising is the following :

#### THE QUEST OF THE CHINESE RUG

With the imperial city of Peking as their goal, nearly a score of America's rug experts hastened to the Orient. For the Chinese rug dominated decorative schemes, and the demand at that time — a year ago — far exceeded the supply.

Noting the eagerness of the American buyers and their keen rivalry for his wares, the Chinese merchant, greedy for gain, boosted his prices. Rugs on the loom, rugs contracted for at a fixed price, were sold and resold at tremendous advances.

And the Americans bought wildly, "plunged," regardless of values, for at any price

#### THE UNITED STATES MUST HAVE CHINESE RUGS

To the oriental mind the situation presented immense future possibilities, and when the American buyers had departed the native merchants formed a combine. Banks advanced money; huge quantities of wool were purchased; hundreds busied themselves at the looms.

But when the rugs were finished, purchasers there were none!

Weeks passed. The orientals, unused to large enterprises, became the prey of mutual distrust. Banks demanded payment; the wool dealers clamored for their money, the weavers for their wage.

### THE MARKET SHOWED A MARKED DECLINE

At this critical juncture cables flashed back and forth, and orders, placed at the psychological moment, saved the day. Incidentally, — and — became possessors of one of the largest and finest collections of Chinese rugs in America — rugs that we can sell at 25 per cent to 33½ per cent less than the same rugs could be sold for under former purchasing conditions.

The characteristics of the rugs are then briefly set forth in these suggestive words :

While the symbolism of the designs is correct, the patterns have been modified so that they have nothing of the bizarre or the grotesque ; motifs are smaller ; details finer.

The colorings are soft, dull, warm, harmonious : tones of taupe, mahogany, blue, mulberry, gold, and copper subtly blended to accord with present-day decorative ideas.

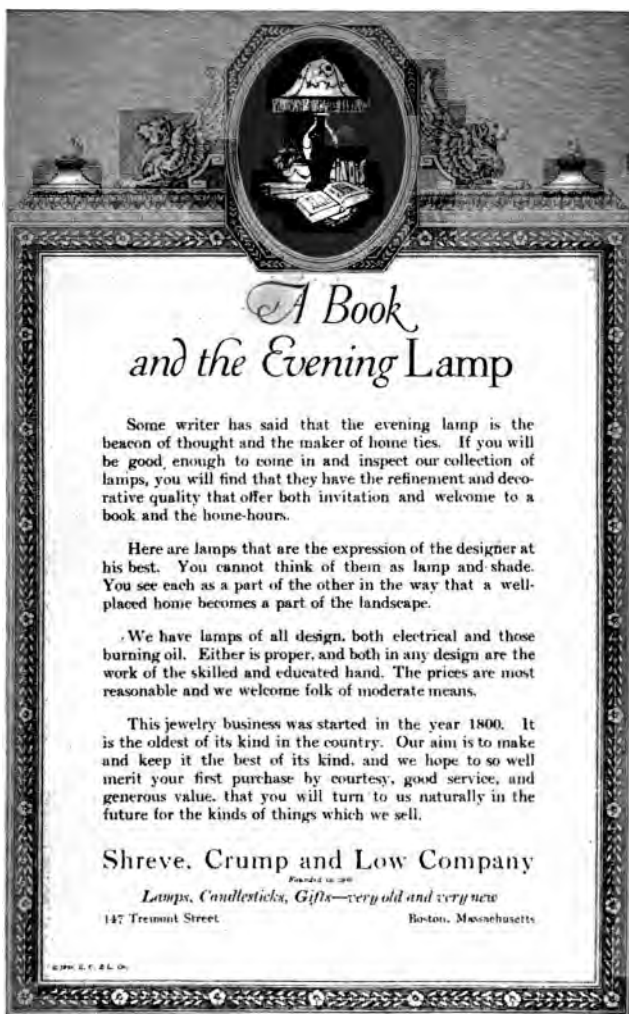
Not until the very end are prices and sizes given.

In another advertisement certain defects in the merchandise are frankly acknowledged :

At practically cost prices ! a whole new shipment of Philippine Embroidered Lingerie.

— Brothers maintain their own workrooms over in Manila that they may the better cater to the ever-growing demand for fine Philippine lingerie.

Recently such demands were put on the Manila workrooms that it was necessary to go outside to other Philippine factories to purchase merchandise to fill the orders. A large quantity of this lingerie has just arrived. On the whole it is very desirable, but it is not quite up to regular standards, and on this account it is marked nearly as low as the price it cost to land it. This dear experiment for —'s is your opportunity.



## *A Book and the Evening Lamp*

Some writer has said that the evening lamp is the beacon of thought and the maker of home ties. If you will be good enough to come in and inspect our collection of lamps, you will find that they have the refinement and decorative quality that offer both invitation and welcome to a book and the home-hours.

Here are lamps that are the expression of the designer at his best. You cannot think of them as lamp and shade. You see each as a part of the other in the way that a well-placed home becomes a part of the landscape.

We have lamps of all design, both electrical and those burning oil. Either is proper, and both in any design are the work of the skilled and educated hand. The prices are most reasonable and we welcome folk of moderate means.

This jewelry business was started in the year 1800. It is the oldest of its kind in the country. Our aim is to make and keep it the best of its kind, and we hope to so well merit your first purchase by courtesy, good service, and generous value, that you will turn to us naturally in the future for the kinds of things which we sell.

**Shreve, Crump and Low Company**  
Established 1800  
*Lamps, Candelsticks, Gifts—very old and very new*  
147 Tremont Street Boston, Massachusetts

© 1900 S. F. B. L. Co.

A DIGNIFIED, HARMONIOUS ADVERTISEMENT





**Educational value of advertisements.** Detailed descriptions of merchandise, often accompanied by illustrations, repay careful study, for much information may be gained from them, and the use of words is instructive. Such study may be made personally profitable as a means of building up a vocabulary useful in selling goods and in developing the critical faculty. After reading the specimen advertisements which follow, analyze them in three different ways :

1. Make a list of specific points of information found in them.
2. Underline words or terms which are new to you and look up their meaning.
3. Make a list of especially well-chosen adjectives.

## I

A wonderful display of shirts in new spring colorings, tailored by one of America's best shirt-makers. They are made of high-count madras and superior-quality mercerized cloths in rich Jacquard figure designs and new and individual stripe effects.

The careful attention that has been paid to every little detail in the making will appeal to the most critical. The neckbands are all properly shrunk, and the colors are all guaranteed fast.

## II

**SILK HOSIERY:** complete assortment of colors and sizes in serviceable hosiery.

*Our No. 59:* pure-dye silk, full-fashioned ; double garter tops ; reinforced soles and toes.

*Our No. 77:* all silk ingrain with lisle-lined garter top and silk-plated soles.

## III

## WARDROBE TRUNKS

Before trusting your valuables in any trunk, ask how it is made.

\$20 — wardrobe trunks have been tested.

They are strong.

They are as strong as most higher-grade trunks.

They are covered with vulcanized fiber, lined with fiber, bound with fiber, — and fiber is the strongest trunk material known.

Inside the vulcanized fiber is three-ply veneer — three pieces of basswood, two cut the straight part of the lumber, the centerpiece cut crosswise. This three-ply veneer may bend but will not break.

Bottoms and tops of the trunks are of heavy lumber to resist bumps.

Instead of being nailed together, like many cheap trunks, these — wardrobe trunks at \$20 are riveted throughout.

They have fine snap locks, which prevent the forgetting to lock one's trunk.

## IV

## TEN STEAMING PLATES OF APPETIZING SOUP

Six crisp, vigorous vegetables — sweet turnips, tender French carrots, pungent white celery, savory cabbage, snow-white potatoes, and spicy onions — temptingly blended make —'s Soup Vegetables as nourishing as they are delicious.

The foregoing extracts suggest the educational possibilities of advertising for salespeople and for the public as well. To *teach* through advertising is a modern tendency and a good one, since the more people know about the merits of any marketable thing, the more intelligently they will buy it.

A unique series of advertisements recently issued by the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company aroused much interest. This company sells service, and it aimed, through these advertisements, to improve the quality of its service by educating the public in the use of the telephone. The entire series is well worth reading. The heading of the series and one specimen advertisement are given here.

**T**HIS advertisement is the fifth of a series of ten designed to effect closer coöperation between the company and its subscribers. There are three parties to a telephone call—the person calling, the person called, and the operator who connects them. The quality of service rendered is determined by the spirit in which all three work together rather than by the individual effort of any one or two of these three persons. We will gladly send complete sets of the series to those desiring them.

#### DON'T JIGGLE THE HOOK

When you take the receiver off of the switch-hook of your telephone a small electric lamp is lighted on the switchboard in front of the operator. To that signal she responds with the familiar, "Number, please?"

After your connection has been made with the other person the lights go out and do not reappear until the receivers are placed on the switch-hooks again, which signals then indicate to the operator that the conversation has ended.

If you desire to get the operator's attention, you must do so by moving the receiver hook down and up, but it **MUST BE DONE SLOWLY** or the little lamp will not have time to glow and the operator will not get any signal. Your observance of this method of signaling will insure more prompt attention by the operator and will help make the service better.

It appears to be the aim of another type of educational advertising to train salespeople in good service by teaching the public *what to demand*. This is an indirect method, and while advertisements of this kind make interesting reading, their value as advertising is open to question. Moreover, unless salespeople read and apply these lessons, they may have little effect other than to make customers critical. An example follows :

You never can tell !

The other day a customer, somewhat carelessly attired, inquired for an overcoat and, in the hands of a careful salesman, selected three quite expensive garments for himself and sons.

Then he told this story :

He had just come from a neighboring store of reputed high class, where the salesman first looked him over and, influenced by his admittedly plain dress, made slight effort to serve him, remarking, "I guess we have n't the sort of clothes you want," and showed him the door — the side door.

After relating the incident the customer asked our salesman, "How will you know that my check is good for this considerable bill?"

"That's up to the office; my job is to sell the goods," was the reply.

And the office found the check signed by a name of national repute whose owner could have bought and paid for a store full of clothes had he so desired.

You never can tell; but it's always safe to give your very best service to every individual, regardless of looks.

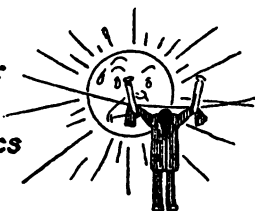
**Humorous advertising.** A lecturer who recently asserted that the dominant trait of the American character is humor supported his statement by references to our literature, our

## ALL WOOL CLOTHES



The chemical test  
for all-wool shows  
we've made the  
right start.

The sun test for  
fast color is  
proof our fabrics  
won't fade.



But the final test  
not only of fabrics,  
but tailoring,  
comes in the wear.

"Your money back  
if you want it"  
No deviation here  
from time honored  
standards.



A PAGE FROM AN ENTERTAINING ADVERTISING LEAFLET



comic supplements, our moving pictures, musical comedies, and vaudeville entertainments. Our advertising might well have been included in the list. There is an increasing tendency to catch public attention through amusing advertising, as is seen in the use of jingles, humorous illustrations, and the exaggerated and grotesque figures which are characteristic of the advertising of certain firms and publications. Such advertising is almost sure to be noticed and read, and if it is original and done in good style, it is as good as a trade-mark in identifying the firm represented.

**Other advertising mediums.** It is well to observe all the mediums by which a store's name, merchandise, or service is put before the public. Theater programs; leaflets and circulars inclosed in bundles or sent through the mails; cards in street cars; signs in elevators and throughout the store; electric signs; billboards set conspicuously in the open country, — these are much-used and effective ways of reaching different groups of people. Since everything that bears the store's name is a kind of advertising, even the sales checks, official stationery, distinctive wrapping paper and boxes, and the store's delivery wagons have advertising value.

**Window displays.** A well-arranged show window is one of the most compelling forms of advertising, and it is because window displays are known to yield large returns that such valuable space is used in this way. Windows are appraised at a certain amount according to the rent paid for the store site, those most advantageously placed in relation to passers-by being most highly rated. Whenever a department makes use of a window for a display of its merchandise, it is, in many stores, charged rent for that space

by the day or week, according to the duration of occupancy. It is reported that a Boston store sets a value of \$306 per day on its fifty windows and that a Chicago store values its twenty-one windows at \$500 per day.<sup>1</sup> These figures give some idea of the heavy expense which may be incurred by this one division of advertising. Printed advertising swells the total by an estimated amount of from \$300,000 to \$700,000 annual expenditure by prominent large stores.<sup>2</sup>

**Coöperation of salespeople.** Salespeople should feel something beyond a natural interest and pride in their store's advertising; they should feel a personal responsibility for making it effective. An advertisement may attract crowds of people to a store, but unless capable salespeople sell goods to the satisfaction of patrons, the money expended in advertising will not prove a wholly profitable investment. Each day's advertisement should be thoughtfully read; the merchandise advertised should be seen and examined, if possible, and an effort should be made to learn its selling points. If this is done, salespeople will be ready to make intelligent response to customers' inquiries, and when they find a customer who is unaware of the special offering they will be interested to direct his attention to the featured goods.

It is of great importance that salespeople make daily observation of window displays, especially those which show merchandise from their own departments or departments closely allied to their own.

A new style of collar displayed in a window attracted the attention of a passer-by, who thought that its unusual shape would supply a special need. Entering the store, she walked to the neckwear section and asked to see a collar like the

<sup>1</sup> Nystrom, *Economics of Retailing*, pp. 166, 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 201.



one in the window. She described it, but no one knew about it. Several other styles were shown. The customer finally said that she would attend to an errand in another part of the store and perhaps when she returned they would be able to show her the collar. When, later, she reappeared it was explained that the collar in the window was one of a new lot just received and that through an oversight a supply had not been sent to the department. Had even one sales-girl from the neckwear section studied the window that morning, much trouble and annoyance would have been obviated.

It would seem a simple matter to study a few display windows every day, yet many ignore them as completely as they do the framed copies of "To-day's Advertisement" which in most stores are conveniently placed on all floors. And there are still others who seeing do not perceive, and reading do not comprehend, because their thoughts are elsewhere.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. What is meant by "seconds" in merchandise?
2. Why are capital letters used so much more extensively in advertisements than in other kinds of writing? Why are so many kinds of type used in a single advertisement?
3. Give two reasons why street cars are an especially good advertising medium.
4. Explain why dark and light cards are usually alternated in street-car frames.
5. Why are pictures and rhymes used so much?
6. What is your opinion of billboard advertising?
7. Give arguments for and against it.
8. What legislation, if any, has been attempted in this state against billboard advertising?

9. Why are billboards often placed in the vicinity of railroad lines?

10. Discuss the style and purpose of newspaper editorials (not advertising), illustrating by reference to a recent editorial.

11. What do you gain from reading editorials?

12. State three ideals of business management expressed in advertising editorial C, page 225.

13. State two ideals or principles which you would try to bring out if you were writing an editorial advertisement for the Fourth of July; for Thanksgiving Day; for the anniversary of the signing of the armistice at the close of the European War.

14. Mention anything that you learn from reading the advertisement about Chinese rugs.

15. Make a list of the words which make the advertisement forceful and convincing.

16. Describe any Chinese rug that you have seen.

17. What is meant by a symbolic design?

18. Explain the meaning of "bizarre"; "grotesque"; "motif."

19. Show that the telephone company's instructive advertising is profitable from the business standpoint.

20. Name any stores whose bundles are easily identified by the wrapping paper or boxes used.

21. Describe any store delivery wagons or automobiles which are easily distinguished.

22. When is the best time to study the window displays of your own store?

23. Of what personal advantage is it to you to observe the windows of your store's competitors?

24. How may your observations be helpful to the buyer? the advertising manager?

25. What idea dominates advertising at the Christmas season? at Easter? during the months of January and February?

26. Name three ideas which might suitably be developed in June advertising.

27. What colors are featured in window displays at Christmas time? during the Easter season? for Hallowe'en? What symbols are appropriate to these festivals?

28. Which of your city papers is considered the best from the standpoint of style, material printed, and editorial attitude?

29. Which paper has the largest circulation? Account for its popularity.

30. Which paper do you read, and why?

31. Name four daily papers of national reputation.

32. Show that the modern term "publicity" is an apt synonym for "advertising."

33. What do you think of the use of the abbreviation "ad" for the full word "advertisement"?

34. Why is a satisfied customer the best advertisement? Give an actual experience, if possible, in illustration.

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. Study street-car advertisements this week. Copy five of those which seem to you the most successful. Select from these the one which interests you most, and tell why it appeals to you.

2. Inspect carefully the main floor, one other floor, and one elevator of a large store for forms of advertising exclusive of merchandise displays. Make a list of the various ways in which the store or the merchandise is brought to the attention of the public.

Give a critical judgment of the signs as to neatness and tastefulness.

3. Make a collection of advertisements. Decide on a certain classification and arrange the advertisements on the basis chosen.

4. Select from a window display any article of merchandise which attracts you. Find out its price. Write a detailed description of it. Then write an advertisement about it, with special attention to the choice of descriptive words.

5. The advertisements which follow are submitted for study and class discussion

## I

**A Wonderful** This is the most magnificent showing of  
**Display of** trimmed hats ever assembled for early  
**One Thousand** choosing, representing an exquisite assortment of faithful copies of the most successful styles shown in Paris for spring, together with a delightful collection of original conceptions from our own milliners. Included are

**\$5.85**

**Wonder Hats** Hats for dress and semidress  
 Smart tailored and sport hats

in the most favored straws and fabrics, trimmed with flowers, ribbons, wings, ornaments, and novelties, in the most beautiful colors and combinations.

Planned for To-day

Come and see to-day the hats that have set all New York talking

## II

HANDKERCHIEFS. After many delays we have finally received a shipment of Appenzell Embroidered Initial Handkerchiefs ordered a year ago last January. It was impossible to secure at any price the same linen as formerly used, and we finally accepted a slightly poorer grade. By this means and by a slight reduction in the size of the handkerchiefs, we have overcome the enormous advance in cost and are able to continue to sell this favorite—known to many of our customers as "No. 8"—at the original price . . . . . 50 cents

## III

**PLAY SHOES FOR CHILDREN**

*In a special section devoted exclusively to Children's Footwear, with salespeople trained for fitting growing feet*

**Cool sandals** and **easy oxfords**, made for freedom of movement and hard wear. The leather is the sturdy tan lotus calf used in United States Army shoes . . . . .

\$1.75 to \$3, according to size

IV

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

**J**UST one hundred and eighty-five years ago to-day George Washington, the Father of our Country, was born.

History tells us that when George was quite a youngster his father missed a favorite cherry tree from his orchard. George promptly confessed to having perpetrated the deed with his little hatchet, and as a reward for telling the truth his father did not punish him.

George Washington would not tell a lie. He was honest, and never falsely represented himself. These traits were conspicuous throughout his long career, which led him to the presidency of the United States.

—— and Company, your store, has built up a reputation for honesty too. We never say anything which is not so at our store, and while we cannot be president of the United States we can be the most exclusive store for women and children in the United States, and that is our ambition.

V

IS IT ALL WOOL?

**A** SAMPLE piece of every cloth we buy is boiled in caustic potash. The slightest trace of cotton and the whole thing's rejected. The test is absolute. Wool, being animal matter, dissolves; cotton, being vegetable, does n't.

IS IT FAST COLOR?

**A** NOTHER piece is exposed to sun and rain for at least ten days. In dry weather we sprinkle with plain, everyday water. We want the test to be severe. What good is an all-wool cloth if the dyes are fugitive?

*Our standards for this spring have not changed one iota*

SPRING SUITS · SPRING OVERCOATS · FOR MEN · FOR BOYS

PRICES ALWAYS FAIR

## VI

## CREAMED CHICKEN À LA KING

Is made with a refined sense of niceties. Ready to serve, when heated, on toast or in patty shells.

The favorite dish of a king may now  
be had when and where you will

It may be some cannot afford it, but all who can will have no other when once they try our

## CREAMED CHICKEN À LA KING

## VII

## Things for Women to Sew

Doors Thrown Wide! Come Share in 29-cent, 39-cent, and 50-cent Silk-mixed Fabrics at 19 cents!

Joy will run high when women see them. And how they'll go!

Loveliest, silken, shimmery stuffs. Many less than half price!

Hundreds upon hundreds of yards! More weaves than you could count. Printed, Jacquard, and silk-striped marquisettes, Jacquard tussahs, Jacquard and plain Canton silks, printed Canton silks, silk dots, Paisley silks, sport stripes, printed tussahs. Every color of the fashion rainbow. Every good combination. 26, 36, and 40 inches wide. A treat for a queen, at 19 cents a yard.

12½-cent Percales . . . . . 9½ cents

Yard wide — light, dark, or medium patterns galore

15-cent Woven Tissue . . . . . 9½ cents

Just enough for one big, busy day's buying! Beautiful—27 inches wide — plaids, stripes, pretty blues, tans, grays, greens, helios, and pinks

59-cent and 75-cent Dress Linens . . . . . 39 cents

Real Irish and French Ramie linen — scarcer than snowballs in July now — 36 and 45 inches wide. The only reason we secured them to sell so low was that the importer only had four shades: tan, oyster-white, navy, and helio. What a treat at 39 cents a yard!

## VIII

JOHN RUSKIN SAID:

ALL works of quality must bear a price in proportion to the skill, time, expense, and risk attending their invention and manufacture. These things called dear are, when justly estimated, *the cheapest*; they are attended with much less profit to the artist than those which everybody calls cheap.

Beautiful forms and compositions are not made by chance, nor can they ever in any material be made at small expense.

A composition for cheapness and not for excellence of workmanship is the most frequent and certain cause of the rapid decay and entire destruction of arts and manufactures.

—'s is a quality store, a high-class store, a style store, a store with individuality. But it is not a high-price store. Our prices are day in and day out as low as or lower than those asked for equally superior merchandise anywhere else.

## IX

## FURNITURE OF CHARACTER

**The Art of Chippendale** has been maintained in all its graceful beauty by our modern designers in the Parlor Suite shown above. A two-piece suite in solid mahogany, upholstered in figured velours and priced at \$257.

The rare combination of graceful lines, exquisite ornamentation, and luxurious comfort which distinguished the masterpieces of Chippendale from all others of their time, and has kept them in vogue, has been faithfully reproduced through the ingenuity of our present-day cabinetmakers.

*We are showing Chippendale effects in suites for the parlor, living room, dining room, and chamber*

**QUESTIONS**

1. Which advertisements are in good taste ?
2. State anything that you learn from each advertisement.
3. Which advertisements may be characterized as sensational ?
4. What statements, if any, impress you as possibly exaggerated ?
5. Which advertisement do you find most interesting ? most individual ?
6. Which impresses you most favorably from the standpoint of English ?
7. Point out any examples of poor English or poor style in any of the advertisements.
8. Which advertisements by their frankness or sincerity make you feel confidence in the store ?
9. In advertisement VI what suggestion weakens the force of the appeal ?



## CHAPTER XV

### STORE ORGANIZATION

Many kinds of responsibility are involved in the management of a department store. There is first the building itself, the big plant, usually a handsome, commodious, finely appointed structure erected at great cost. This building must be maintained in cleanliness, safety, comfort, and, in some cases, even elegance. A watchful eye must see that the store appears well at all times, that it is ordered in compliance with building and labor laws, and that an exacting public may find no ground for adverse criticism. This is called the *operating* end of the business.

When the building has been erected and equipped it must next be stocked with merchandise. Goods bought in all parts of the world must be delivered, assembled, stored, displayed, and sold. In one comprehensive term this is called *merchandising*.

For the buying and selling of merchandise and all the other necessary kinds of work involved in carrying on the business, a large number of workers, often numbering into the thousands, must be hired. The store force as a whole is often referred to as the personnel, and the department which has charge of hiring the workers and which is responsible for many personnel problems is the *employment* department.

To facilitate the sale of goods and increase the volume of business by creating desire and stimulating imagination an *advertising* department exists.

And finally, there is the owner's capital — the investment which has brought the business into being. Wisely expended this money produces profit, without which no store can long survive. The administering of store funds is in the hands of a *financial, or accounting, department*.

**The general manager.** It is manifest that no one person, no matter how able, could be personally responsible for all these important divisions of store management. In all business enterprises, as in all forms of government, there must, however, be a head, a leader, directing the larger movements of the entire organization. The chief executive in a store usually bears the title of General Manager. This official may be the owner of the store, but is more commonly the authorized and trusted agent of the owner. He directs the policies of the business and is responsible in general for its successful administration. He is usually the final authority in case of any serious dispute. The man who holds the position of general manager should be a person thoroughly conversant and constantly in touch with financial and trade conditions. He should be a high-principled man of sound judgment and of moral courage, and he should be able to win and hold the respect and confidence of each member of the organization.

**The four divisions.** Since, as has been stated, it would be impracticable for the general manager to give his personal attention to the innumerable details of store management, a great amount of important work is delegated to other officials. There are usually four special managers, or executives, who, although responsible to the general manager, largely control certain departments of the business. The division of responsibility may be represented as follows:

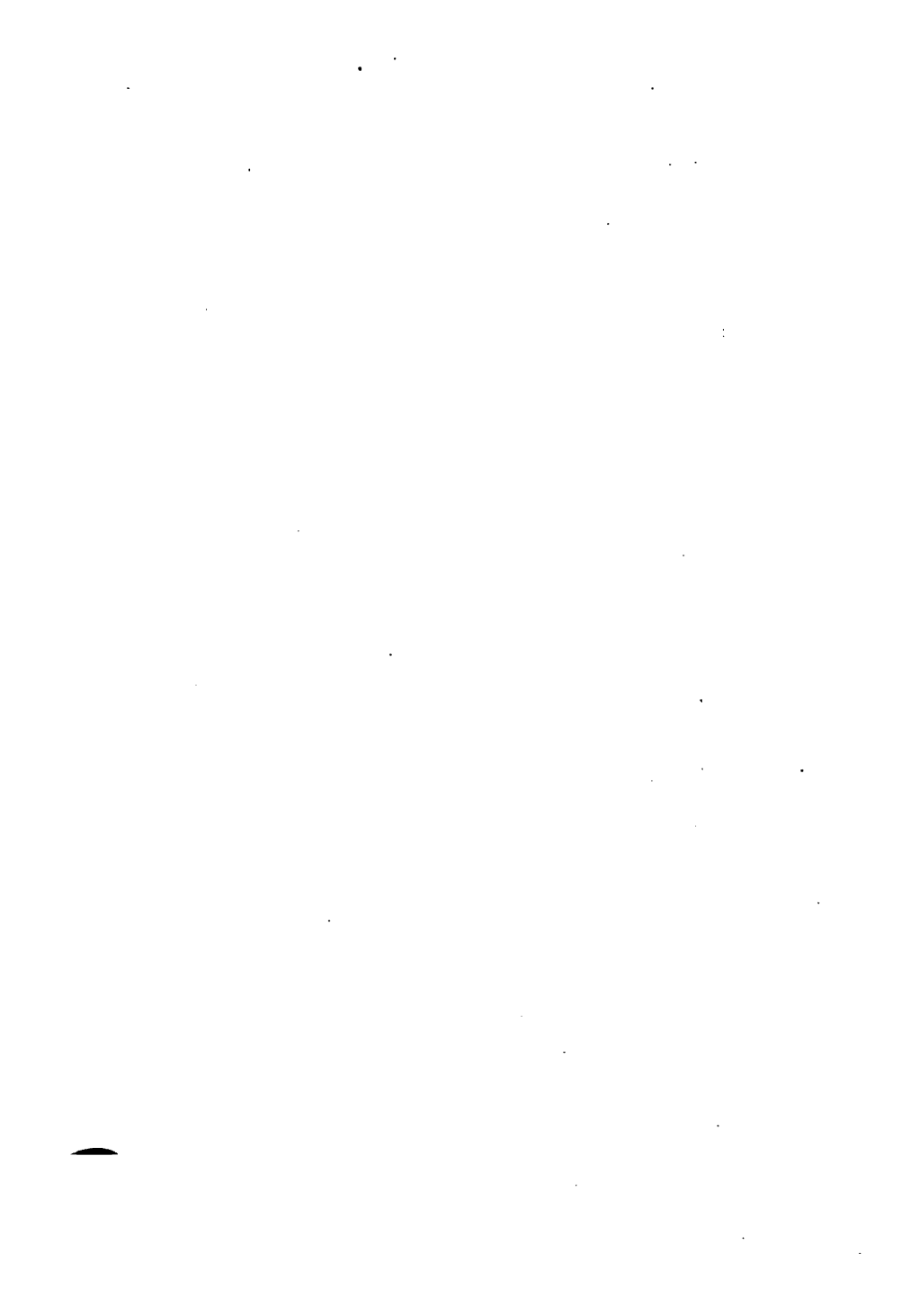
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nationality \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade finished in school? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Live with parents, relatives, keep house or board? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What does your father do? \_\_\_\_\_ Mother? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is anyone dependent on you for support, if so, who? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Give names and addresses of three last Employers and state why you left.

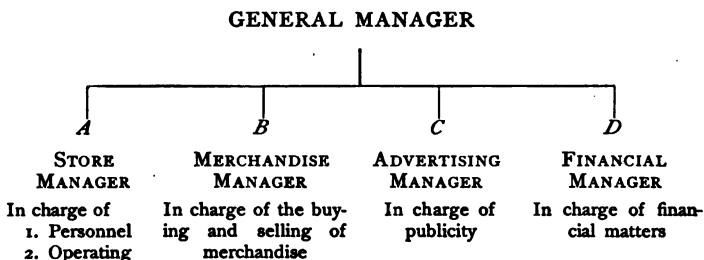
Employer's Name	Employer's Address	Position You Held	When Employed
			From To
1			From To
Reason for leaving			
2			From To
Reason for leaving			
3			From To
Reason for leaving			

For what position do you apply? \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_ What dept? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Were you ever employed by A. B. Smith & Co.? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Will you be willing to permit a physical examination by our physicians should we so require?  
 I agree, if engaged, to conform to the rules and regulations of A. B. SMITH & CO., and I also understand that my employment is by the day at a weekly rate, and  
 all right to compensation ceases with the day employment is terminated.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

A DEPARTMENT-STORE APPLICATION BLANK





A. The *store manager* hires, discharges, and transfers employees. He directs the educational department in the training and supervision of all divisions of the store force. He is responsible for wholesome and agreeable working conditions and oversees the restaurant, hospital, recreation room, library, and clubrooms maintained by most well-conducted stores for the benefit of their workers. The employees' insurance system, providing for sick and death benefits, is usually under his direction. It is his business to see that the public is well served and to make sure that complaints are satisfactorily adjusted. As the executive in charge of operating, he sees that the building is kept clean and in repair and that needed changes and improvements are made. He is responsible for more kinds of work and is brought into contact with greater numbers of people than any other store official. He should therefore be many-sided in his interests and an individual of ready adaptability. A good judge of human nature, he should combine the qualities of a disciplinarian with those of an understanding friend.

In large stores the store manager is assisted in his many duties by a *superintendent*, who assumes a great deal of responsibility. In smaller stores the store manager and the superintendent are usually one and the same person.

The following outline shows the groups of workers who are partially or entirely under the direction of the store manager :

- I. Superintendent
- II. Assistant superintendent
- III. Staff of educational department
- IV. Staff of welfare department
- V. Floor managers
- VI. Employees who handle merchandise :<sup>1</sup>
  1. Heads of stock
  2. Salespeople
  3. Stock boys and girls
- VII. Junior force (younger workers)
- VIII. Staff of shipping department
- IX. Staff of protection department
- X. Employees concerned with service features :
  1. Waitresses
  2. Nurses
  3. Adjustment clerks
  4. Elevator operators
  5. Store guides
  6. Personal-service assistants
- XI. Employees whose work concerns the store plant :
  1. Carpenters
  2. Watchmen
  3. Engineers
  4. Porters
  5. Cleaners
  6. Electricians

*B. The merchandise manager* decides the appropriation allowed each department for the purchase of merchandise. He keeps himself constantly informed as to the movement of stock, and investigates abnormal fluctuations of trade.

<sup>1</sup> The organization of some stores makes these groups responsible also to the merchandise manager, an arrangement which is apt to result in waste and confusion on account of the overlapping of authority.

With the buyers he plans long in advance all important merchandise events such as openings, holiday offerings, and special sales. Buyers report regularly to the merchandise manager, and all orders for merchandise are subject to his approval. It is said that for success in this position two qualifications are of supreme importance : a man must be an expert judge of merchandise and he must be able to gauge his public, discerning with prophetic insight what goods will appeal to it and in what quantity they will be bought.

The duties of the following groups of workers bring them under the direction of the merchandise manager :

- I. Buyers
- II. Assistant buyers
- III. Receivers and markers of new goods
- IV. Shoppers (for comparison of merchandise in competing stores)
- V. Staff of the alteration department
- VI. Staff of the mail-order department

C. The *advertising manager* should be a person of imagination and of artistic instinct and training. He should possess good taste and know how to develop it in others. He should be able to write correctly and effectively. Many successful writers of advertisements are persons of wide reading.

Two distinct groups are directly responsible to the advertising manager :

- I. Those who reach the public by means of merchandise display, exhibits, and decorations :
  1. Window trimmers
  2. Decorators
- II. Those who reach the public by means of printed matter and signs :
  1. Writers of advertisements
  2. Artists
  3. Sign painters
  4. Printers

D. The *financial manager* is responsible for keeping accurate records of all money received and paid out by the store, for compiling financial statements, and for the opening and maintaining of charge accounts. Most stores recognize at least four important subdivisions of the financial department. In the *auditing department* sales checks are sorted, records are made up from them, and errors are traced and adjusted. In the *statistical department* other records are compiled, many of them on a comparative basis showing, for example, the number of sales, the number of credits, and the volume of business for each department, and the totals for the entire store for each day of the year for a series of years. Conditions of weather and other circumstances being favorable, the business should show an annual increase. It is the function of the financial manager to bring to the attention of the general manager such facts and figures as will keep him constantly acquainted with the state of the business. If the organization is weak at any point, the defect is made known in this way and may be remedied before it has gone too far. The third subdivision of the financial manager's responsibility, the *credit department*, is of great importance, especially in large stores carrying many charge accounts. One Boston store has 70,000 charge accounts on its books, and stores doing half their total business on a charge basis are not unusual. Seventy per cent of the total business of one store is represented by its 42,000 charge accounts. From these figures it will be seen that a rigid safeguarding of the integrity of the credit department is most necessary. A fourth subdivision has charge of the store's financial obligations in respect to the payment of bills and salaries.





A ROOF-GARDEN FOR THE PLEASURE AND REFRESHMENT OF THE EMPLOYEES OF A  
WESTERN STORE



Classification of the workers employed in a store's financial office varies according to the methods and equipment of the office, but such a list as the following is representative of those who come under the direction of the financial manager :

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| I. Auditors      | VI. Stenographers   |
| II. Authorizers  | VII. Invoice clerks |
| III. Bookkeepers | VIII. Filing clerks |
| IV. Cashiers     | IX. Billing clerks  |
| V. Statisticians | X. Paymaster        |

Recalling a country store and its small staff of perhaps not more than three persons,—the proprietor, one other salesman, and a single bookkeeper,—one may be inclined to question the need of a department store's complicated machinery for the transfer of goods from dealer to consumer. But the magnitude of the undertaking makes necessary a detailed system, and the system, with its practically automatic operations, takes the place of supervision which would otherwise be required to prevent waste, misunderstanding, and wrongdoing. If we follow the merchandise through the different stages of its journey, from the time it enters the store until it leaves as a customer's purchase, the reason for the elaborate mechanism may be more apparent.

#### PROGRESS OF MERCHANDISE

- I. Ordered by buyers.
- II. Delivered at store's receiving room.
- III. Boxes and bales opened.
- IV. Contents examined, counted, and checked with bill.
- V. Further examined by stock clerk and compared with buyer's order.

- VI. Tagged or ticketed by marker.<sup>1</sup>
- VII. Merchandise placed on reserve in stock room.
- VIII. Transferred by stock boy to department when needed for sale.
- IX. Received and signed for by head of stock.
- X. Style, price, and quantity noted by salespeople. Examined for selling points. Often explained or demonstrated by buyer.
- XI. Placed according to proper classification on shelves, in drawers or cases, or on racks.
- XII. Shown to customers.
- XIII. Sold, as indicated by the writing of a sales check.
- XIV. Sent to shipping room unless taken home by purchaser.
- XV. Sorted and placed in proper bin for collection by expressman.
- XVI. Delivered at purchaser's home.

<sup>1</sup> The method of marking varies according to the merchandise. More particulars are noted for garments than for most other lines of goods. The system of one store marks the tags attached to women's skirts in this way:

1st line	. . . . .	68 A 35
2d line	. . . . .	B 547
3d line	. . . . .	51 A \$3.50

The above may be interpreted as follows:

1st line

68 represents the date when the merchandise was received into stock — June (6th month), 1918.

A is a code letter indicating the material of the skirt — cotton wash goods in this case.

35 is the number assigned to the manufacturer of the line of skirts represented or, possibly, to the dealer. It is included merely for convenience in reference.

2d line

B is a code letter representing the cost price of the skirt.

547 stands for what is known as a model (or style) number. It indicates to the buyer the design or pattern of the skirt.

3d line

51 A stands for the department in which wash skirts are sold.

\$3.50 is the retail price of the skirt.

Size may be indicated by a number written or stamped in a certain place on the tag or by distinctive colors of price tags.

**The importance of coopération.** These sixteen steps are merely a synopsis of the treatment necessarily accorded all merchandise. Many details have been omitted ; but perhaps enough has been given to show that the distribution of goods by a department store is no simple matter, and that if one worker fails in his duty, his failure must react unfairly on others and may even cause the system to break down. For example, in writing out a sale a salesman made a figure 3 so poorly that it was taken for a 5 in the auditing office. This made a difference of two cents in a total — a trifling amount, but as troublesome to the office as a larger amount and as necessary to correct when the books must show an exact balance. After many hours of search the error was traced to the illegible entry on the sales check. It was estimated that the time spent in investigating this seemingly insignificant mistake was worth seven dollars.

Indifferent salesmanship is another form of defective work which makes trouble for others and frequently involves the store in needless expense. An article poorly sold is almost sure to be returned. This means additional labor for delivery men, clerical force, stock clerks, and credit office. One store reports a daily average of three hundred parcels returned by mail, express, or by the store's own delivery wagons. Much of this unprofitable business would never arise if all salespeople did their work well.

Besides returning goods, some dissatisfied customers go to one executive after another with complaints ; others write letters requiring most courteous and tactful replies. All in all it may be more laborious and more expensive to put an article back in stock than to get it there in the first place. And in spite of the best efforts of all concerned, it is quite

possible that the goodwill of an annoyed or disappointed customer may never be fully regained.

Coöperation keeps the big store machine running smoothly. The able and interested salesman appreciates this and never forgets the clerical workers and the shippers, whom he helps or hinders according to his own standard of work. He keeps in mind also the large outlay for advertising and does his part toward making that profitable, and he endeavors to give such service to customers as will reduce misunderstandings, disappointments, and adjustments to the minimum.

Three hundred years ago Sir Francis Bacon said: "I hold every man a *debtor to his profession*, from the which as men do of course seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they . . . to endeavor . . . by way of amends, to be a help and an ornament thereunto." When we sell our services to an employer we place ourselves under obligation to be a "help and an ornament" to his business by giving to it our strength, our interest, and our loyalty.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. Give the names of the chief executives in any store in which you have worked.

2. Which of the four divisions of store administration seems to you the most interesting, and why?

3. Why does an advertising manager need to be imaginative and artistic?

4. How does it help a writer of advertisements to be a wide reader?

5. What qualities do you consider essential (1) in a salesman? (2) in an examiner (inspector)? (3) in a marker of goods? (4) in an elevator operator? (5) in a driver's assistant? (6) in a matron in charge of a waiting-room? (7) in a telephone operator?

6. State as fully as possible the duties of a floor manager.
7. From your observation of a floor manager's work what do you consider the difficulties of his position?
8. How may you, as a salesperson, lessen his difficulties?
9. Mention three ways in which salespeople may cooperate with buyers.
10. What are the duties of an assistant buyer?
11. State the duties of a head of stock; a stock boy or girl.
12. What positions in a store may be held equally well by men and women?
13. Explain the position of a comparison shopper; a service shopper.
14. What is the function of a "professional shopper"?
15. Which are the busiest days of the week in the stores of this city? Account for the greater activity of these days.
16. Which are the busiest hours of the day in these stores?
17. What is done to induce people to shop during the less crowded hours of the day?
18. What are the advantages to customers of shopping early in the day?
19. What are "hour sales"? If you have never observed one, talk with someone who has, and give your opinion of this type of bargain sale.
20. What are trading stamps, and what is their underlying purpose?
21. What is your opinion of the trading-stamp policy? Give reasons for your answer.
22. Explain the method of estimating the number of trading stamps to which a sale is entitled.
23. Which are the busiest months of the year in department stores, and what makes them so?
24. What is done to create business during dull seasons?
25. Explain the advantages of the use of colored tags to indicate sizes.

26. Discuss any disadvantages of this system.
27. Why are tags written for the most part in code?
28. Why has the writing of the *selling price* of any article in code figures been almost universally abandoned?
29. Describe exactly what is done, as you see it, when you return an article to the largest store in this city and receive a cash refund.
30. Why is this an uneconomical proceeding for the store? for the customer?
31. Explain in detail how you, as a customer, like to be treated.
32. Express in your own words the ideas embodied in the quaintly phrased quotation from Bacon.



A CORNER OF AN INVITING READING-ROOM FOR EMPLOYEES



**ASSIGNMENTS.**

1. Make a list of the positions usually held by girls and women in department stores. Start with the least responsible position and grade to the highest.

2. Analyze in a similar way the positions usually held by men and boys.

3. Make a diagrammatic representation of the organization of a department store.

4. Obtain a canceled sales check from a department store. Study carefully all the printed headings and explain each one from the standpoint of store organization. Tell why each point asked for is needed and just what is done with the information supplied.

5. Think over one complete day which you have recently spent in a selling position.

a. How did you obtain your salesbook, and what did you do to prepare it for the day's work?

b. What did you do with your salesbook before giving it up at night? Why?

c. How many different forms of the sales check did you make out? Name the different forms which required the floor manager's signature.

d. Name all the offices and officials with whom you came in contact during the day.

6. Make a list of all the store rules and regulations which have been brought to your attention. Give a reason for each one.

7. Explain what is meant by the expression "Social-Welfare Activities" and make a list of all such activities carried on by one store in this city.

8. Make a copy of the application blank shown on page 249 and fill it out as neatly, completely, and accurately as possible. Compare this form with the application blank used by a store in this city.



## APPENDIX

### SUBJECTS FOR THEMES AND SPECIAL TOPICS

1. My First Day in a Department Store.
2. The Advertising Value of a Name.
3. Opportunities for Salesmanship at a County Fair.
4. Apprenticeship a Century Ago and To-day.
5. Medieval Guilds and Fairs.
6. The Bazaars of the Orient.
7. The National Chamber of Commerce : its Organization and Purpose.
8. Local Merchants' Associations.
9. Bonuses, Commissions, and Profit-Sharing for Employees.
10. Privileges of Membership in Employees' Organizations.
11. Reserve Stock : what it is and its Purpose.
12. The Trade-Union Movement.
13. The Minimum Wage.
14. The Consumers' League : its History, Purpose, and Work.
15. Advantages of Work in a Department Store.
16. Special Orders : How and When they should be taken.
17. The Business of Mail-Order Houses.
18. " Self-Serve " Stores and Departments.
19. The Itinerant Salesman.
20. Old Fabrics and Old Dresses.
21. Bargain Sales.
22. " As for enthusiasm, it is worth more than money and learning put together as a producer of happiness."
23. The Ideal Salesperson.

24. Nature as a Teacher of Color.
25. The Story of a Rag Rug.
26. Moving-Picture Advertising.
27. A Child's Impression of a Toy Department.
28. Florists' Windows.
29. My Twenty-five Dollar Camping Outfit.
30. The Textile Departments of a Large Store.
31. Famous Chain Stores.
32. Good Books as an Aid in Selling.
33. How Good Plays help us in our Work.
34. How to use the Lunch Hour.
35. My Clothing and its Cost for One Year.
36. How an Old Employee may help a New One.
37. Pleasures and Perils of Christmas Shopping.
38. "It rests with the people to commend and command what serves them best."
39. Participation of Stores in Community Activities.
40. Our Responsibility as Customers.
41. The Five-and-Ten-Cent Store: Bane or Blessing?
42. Telephone Salesmanship.
43. Leading Fashion Journals.
44. The Argument for American-Made Goods.
45. The Merchandise Demand of each of the Four Seasons.
46. The Pros and Cons of Trading Stamps.
47. Observation of a Demonstrator and his Methods.
48. Labor Laws affecting Retail Stores.
49. An Oriental Shop: its Wares and its Atmosphere.
50. John James Audubon and the Millinery Trade.
51. Methods of Trading among the Indians.
52. Famous French Designers of Clothing.

## BOOKS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

BOOKS OR PARTS OF BOOKS TO BE READ, REVIEWED, AND USED  
AS A BASIS FOR ORAL DISCUSSION OR WRITTEN EXERCISES ON  
SELECTED TOPICS

*A Description of a Country Store :*

PERRY, BLISS. The Broughton House, chap. vii

*A Child's First Glimpse of a City Department Store :*

CANFIELD, DOROTHY. The Bent Twig, Book II, chap. x

*A Theory of Fashion :*

CANFIELD, DOROTHY. "Hats," a story in Home Fires in France.

*Bargaining in Italy :*

DE MILLE, JAMES. The Dodge Club, chap. xxiii

In *Harper's Magazine*. Vol. XXXV

*Shops of English Tradesmen in the Reign of James I :*

SCOTT, SIR WALTER. The Fortunes of Nigel, chap. i

*Service in Stores :*

LEE, GERALD STANLEY. Crowds, Book II, chap. ix, pp. 129-135

*Hepsibah's Little Shop and her Salesmanship :*

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL. The House of Seven Gables, chaps.  
iii, iv

*For an Understanding of Foreign Citizens :*

ANTIN, MARY. The Promised Land

KELLY, MYRA. Little Citizens

RIHBANY, ABRAHAM MITRIE. A Far Journey

RIIS, JACOB. The Making of an American

STEINER, EDWARD A. From Alien to Citizen

*For an Understanding of the Negro Problem :*

WASHINGTON, BOOKER T. Up from Slavery

*For an Appreciation of the Spirit of the Physically Handicapped :*

KELLER, HELEN. The Story of my Life

*Of Interest in Connection with Textile Study :**Sheep and Sheep-Raising :*

AUSTIN, MARY. Isidro

AUSTIN, MARY. The Flock

HARDY, THOMAS. Far from the Madding Crowd

JACKSON, HELEN HUNT. Ramona

OLLIVANT, ALFRED. Bob, Son of Battle

*Cotton Mills :*

COOKE, GRACE MCGOWAN. The Power and the Glory

*Sericulture :*

RIHBANY, ABRAHAM MITRIE. A Far Journey, chaps. i and v

*Entrance of Women into New England Textile Mills :*

ROBINSON, HARRIET H. Loom and Spindle

*The Revolutionizing Textile Inventions :*

HOLLAND, RUPERT S. Historic Inventions, chaps. v and vi

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DOOLEY, WILLIAM H. Textiles

FALES, JANE. Dressmaking

GIBBS, CHARLOTTE. Household Textiles

EARLE, ALICE MORSE. Home Life in Colonial Days

HOOPER, LUTHER. Hand-Loom Weaving

KINNE, HELEN, and COOLEY, ANNA M. Shelter and Clothing

MCGOWAN, ELLEN BEERS, and WAITE, CHARLOTTE A. Textiles  
and Clothing

MATTHEWS, J. M. The Textile Fibres

MITCHELL, C. A., and PRIDEAUX, R. M. Fibres used in Textile  
and Allied Industries

NISBET, HARRY. A Grammar of Textile Design

NYSTROM, PAUL. Textiles

TOOTHAKER, CHARLES R. Commercial Raw Materials

WATSON, KATE HEINTZ. Textiles and Clothing

WOOLMAN, MARY SCHENCK. Clothing

WOOLMAN, MARY S., and MCGOWAN, ELLEN B. Textiles

*Cotton :*

- BENNETT, FRANK P. A Cotton Fabrics Glossary  
BROOKS, C. P. Cotton  
LEE, HENRY. The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary  
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TOMPKINS, D. A. Cotton and Cotton Oil  
WATT, SIR GEORGE. The Wild and Cultivated Cotton Plants of the World  
WILKINSON, FREDERICK. The Story of the Cotton Plant

*Silk :*

- American Silk Journal* (Publisher). A Dictionary of Silk Terms  
CHITTICK, JAMES. Silk Manufacture and its Problems  
DURAN, LEO. Raw Silk  
EDWARDES, M. Silkworms  
FERNBACH, R. LIVINGSTON. The Chemical Aspects of Silk Manufacture  
RAYNER, HOLLINS. Silk Throwing and Waste Silk Spinning  
WILLIAMS, CARRIE. Complete Instruction in rearing Silkworms

*Wool :*

- BENNETT, FRANK P. Woolen and Worsted Fabrics Glossary  
SMITH, HENRY B. Sheep and Wool Industry of Australasia  
UNITED STATES TARIFF BOARD, 1912. Schedule K

*Lace :*

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JACKSON, Mrs. F. NEVILL. A History of Hand-Made Lace  
JOURDAIN, M. Old Lace  
MOORE, N. HUDSON. The Lace Book  
PALLISER, Mrs. BURY. History of Lace  
POLLEN, Mrs. JOHN HUNGERFORD. Seven Centuries of Lace

*Salesmanship, Advertising, and Trade :*

- CHERINGTON, PAUL TERRY. The First Advertising Book  
CORBION, W. A. The Principles of Salesmanship, Department, and System  
DELAND, LORIN F. At the Sign of the Dollar  
DELAND, LORIN F. Imagination in Business

- NYSTROM, PAUL. Economics of Retailing  
NYSTROM, PAUL. Retail Selling and Store Management  
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*Upholsterer and Interior Decorator*  
*Wall Paper News and Interior Decoration*  
*Women's and Infants' Furnisher*  
*Women's Wear*

FRENCH TERMS SALESPEOPLE SHOULD KNOW<sup>1</sup>*Colors***beige**: drab**blanc, blanche**: white**café au lait**: the color of coffee combined with hot milk**cerise**: literally, cherry; a red-violet hue**champagne**: very light tan**chartreuse**: the color of the wine of this name; a light, vivid yellow**ciel**: literally, sky; a light blue**écru**: a light tan, somewhat darker than champagne**jaune**: yellow**mauve**: the color of the petals of the mallow; a delicate violet hue**noir**: black**réséda**: literally, mignonette; a gray green**rouge**: red**taupe**: a warm gray; usually tinged with brown or violet**vert**: green**vieux bleu**: old blue; gray blue of medium tone*Fabrics***barège**: a sheer, light-weight woolen material, seen occasionally in veils**batiste**: a soft, smooth, light-weight material of mercerized cotton**bouclé**: literally, curled; a thick woolen fabric with loops of hairy fibers brought to the surface**broché**: brocade; an elaborate woven pattern, usually a rich silk fabric**charmeuse**: a soft, rich satin**chenille**: a soft, lustrous, decorative material of cotton; used chiefly in yarns for trimmings**chiffon**: a delicate, diaphanous silk fabric**coutil**: an exceptionally fine, firm, close cotton fabric used for corsets; usually a fine herringbone weave**crêpe de Chine**: a soft, firm silk fabric that has a characteristic crinkled appearance**épinglé**: a woolen fabric resembling poplin but with horizontal ribs set less closely**faïlle française**: a soft pliable silk fabric with satin finish and close, fine horizontal ribs**glacé**: a soft changeable silk with warp yarns of one color and filling yarns of another**grosgrain**: a stiff, heavy silk fabric with close, firm horizontal ribs

<sup>1</sup> It is strongly urged that these vocabularies be studied under the direction of a French teacher, if possible.

**louisine** : a silk fabric of medium weight and luster; a fine basket weave gives a slightly rough feeling and appearance

**malines** : a fine silk net, very delicate and sheer

**marquissette** : a fine but strong silk net; the distinctive weave gives firmness

**messaline** : a soft light-weight satin

**moiré** : a fairly heavy silk material with horizontal ribs; the distinctive feature is a watered effect produced by pressure

**mousseline de soie** : crisp, fine, sheer silk muslin

**peau de cygne** : literally, swan's-skin; a soft satin similar to messaline

**peau de soie** : literally, silk skin; a firm, handsome, somewhat stiff and dignified silk fabric with an almost invisible horizontal rib

**piqué** : a substantial cotton material with prominent ribs running either vertically or horizontally

**toile** : linen cloth

**tulle** : like malines except that it is even more fragile; used for wedding veils

**velours de laine** : wool velours; a thick, soft, warm woolen fabric; exceptionally warm for its

weight; a fine, close nap obscures the weave

**voile** : a light-weight, sheer, loosely woven fabric of cotton, silk, or wool; very durable, owing to its hard-twisted yarns

### *Laces*<sup>1</sup>

**appliqué** : a lace made by sewing lace figures on a delicate foundation usually of net

**Chantilly** : a lace made usually of silk; the distinctive feature is the outlining of the figures which form the pattern by a flat, untwisted silk thread. The lace receives its name from Chantilly, a town near Paris, where the industry originated

**Cluny** : a relatively heavy bobbin lace made of cotton, linen, or silk. In modern Cluny lace the patterns are usually geometric

**dentelle** : the French term for lace

**duchesse** : a fine bobbin lace

**entre deux** : lace or embroidery insertion; usually a fine beading of lace or embroidery

**filet** ("darned netting") : a foundation of net, with square mesh, is stretched on a frame, and the pattern is darned in

<sup>1</sup> **bobbin lace** : lace made on a stuffed cushion by the interlacing of threads wound on bobbins. — **needle-point lace** : lace made entirely with the needle.

**gülpure** : a general term applied to large-patterned, relatively coarse laces

**macramé** : a heavy, coarse, effective cotton lace made from cord of the same name; used most extensively for upholstery purposes

**passementerie** : until the seventeenth century the French term for lace was *passement*, and the word "passementerie" meant a lace-maker. It now stands for almost any kind of narrow trimming

**picot** : a small loop introduced into a pattern of lace to enrich it; also a narrow crocheted lace edge

**point d'esprit** : a term applied to a net whose surface is broken at regular intervals by small solid squares

**point de gaze** : an extremely fine and delicate point lace; considered by many the most choice of all point laces

**point de Venise** : a rich needle-point lace with showy designs brought out in bold relief

**Renaissance** : a modern lace of narrow braid fashioned into patterns; Battenberg lace is a form of Renaissance lace

**torchon** : a relatively coarse bobbin lace much used in narrow edges for trimming underwear and

children's garments; the patterns are usually very simple

**Valenciennes** : a fine, soft, dainty bobbin lace with very open and regular mesh; originally one of the finest and rarest of laces. The most choice variety was made of such fine thread that the lace was made in underground rooms, where the dampness prevented the delicate thread from breaking

### *Clothing*

**blouse** : waist

**botte** : boot

**chapeau** : hat

**chemisette** : a vestee or neckpiece

**chou** : literally, cabbage; a soft, fluffy bow of malines or tulle worn at the neck

**col** : collar

**cravate** : necktie

**fichu** : a soft collar with long ends

**gilet** : vest

**guimpe** : a kind of chemisette or waist

**jabot** : a kind of neckwear

**lingerie** : muslin underwear

**manteau** : cloak

**négligée** : a loose, informal gown

**pantalon** : trousers

**pantoufle** : slipper

**pardessus** : overcoat

**robe de chambre** : a lounging robe

**ruche** : ruching or ruffling for the neck

**soulier** : shoe  
**toque** : a small, close hat

*Miscellaneous*

**aigrette** : a tuft of feathers taken from birds of the heron family  
**atelier** : a studio or workroom of a designer

**bague** : ring

**bassinet** : a wicker basket serving as a cradle; usually lined with silk and lace

**boudoir** : a lady's chamber

**bourse** : purse

**bouton** : button

**bretelle** : an ornamental, suspender-like shoulder strap

**brodé à la main** : hand embroidered

**brosse** : brush

**buffet** : a sideboard; also a term used to describe an informal luncheon

**caoutchouc** : rubber

**carafe** : a glass water bottle

**carte de visite** : visiting card

**casserole** : a baking dish

**chic** : very stylish and effective; chic effects are often due to clever or unusual designing

**chignon** : an arrangement of the hair at the nape of the neck

**ciré** : waxed; made shiny

**coiffure** : any arrangement of the hair

**corsage** : the waist of a dress

**couteau** : knife

**couverture** : blanket

**cuiller** : spoon

**cuisine** : kitchen; also cookery

**début** : a beginning; a young girl's formal entrance into society

**débutante** : a young girl who has just made her début

**décolleté** : a gown cut low in the neck

**drap** : cloth

**drapeau** : flag

**eau de toilette** : toilet water

**enfant** : baby

**essuie-main** : towel

**façon** : fashion

**femme** : woman

**fillette** : little girl

**fourche** : fork

**gants** : gloves

**garçon** : boy

**garçonnet** : little boy

**homme** : man

**jeune fille** : young girl

**layette** : a baby's first outfit

**lit** : bed

**lorgnette** : eyeglasses with a long or short handle

**marabout** : soft, downy feathers from a bird of the stork family

**massage** : a remedial treatment of the body consisting chiefly of rubbing

**masseuse** : one who gives massage treatment

**mode** : fashion

**modiste** : milliner

**montre** : watch

**mouchoir** : handkerchief

<b>nouveauté</b> : novelty	<b>parapluie</b> : umbrella
<b>objets d'art</b> : artistic furnishings and ornaments	<b>parfum</b> : perfume
<b>ombrelle</b> : parasol	<b>plat</b> : dish
<b>oreiller</b> : pillow	<b>poudre de riz</b> : rice powder
<b>panier</b> : literally, a basket. In dressmaking, material puffed or draped at the hips. In foreign countries beasts of burden carry baskets in pairs, one on each side. This explains the use of the term	<b>rideau</b> : curtain
<b>papier</b> : paper	<b>ruban</b> : ribbon
<b>papier-mâché</b> : a hard and strong substance made of paper pulp	<b>sachet</b> : scented powder
	<b>savon</b> : soap
	<b>soutache</b> : a narrow braid
	<b>suède</b> : a kind of soft, undressed leather
	<b>tailleur</b> : tailor
	<b>tasse</b> : cup
	<b>trousseau</b> : a bride's outfit
	<b>verre</b> : glass

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